



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

The Cottu Books

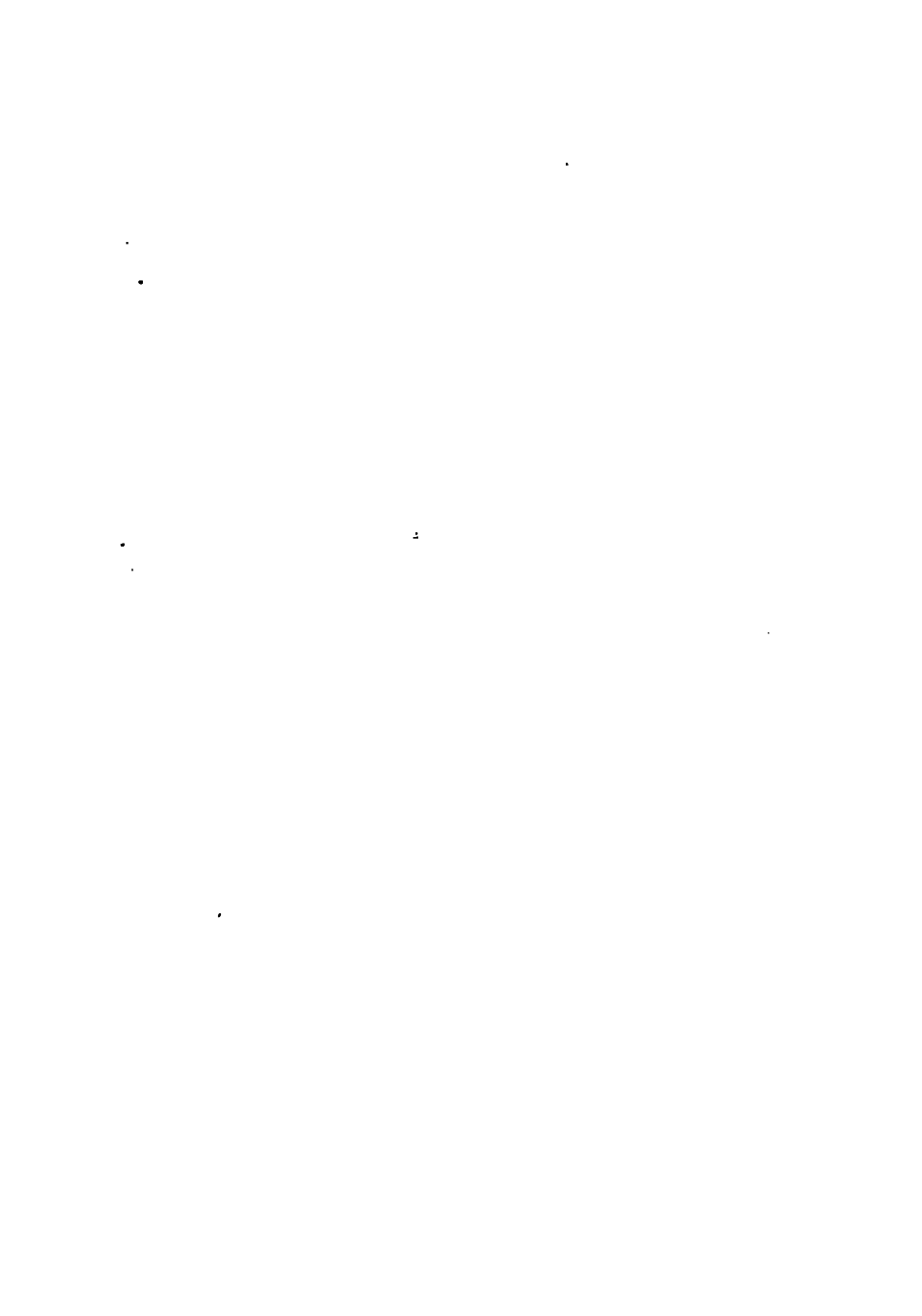


HAMPSTEAD
EDITION.

21428.22.15



HARVARD COLLEGE

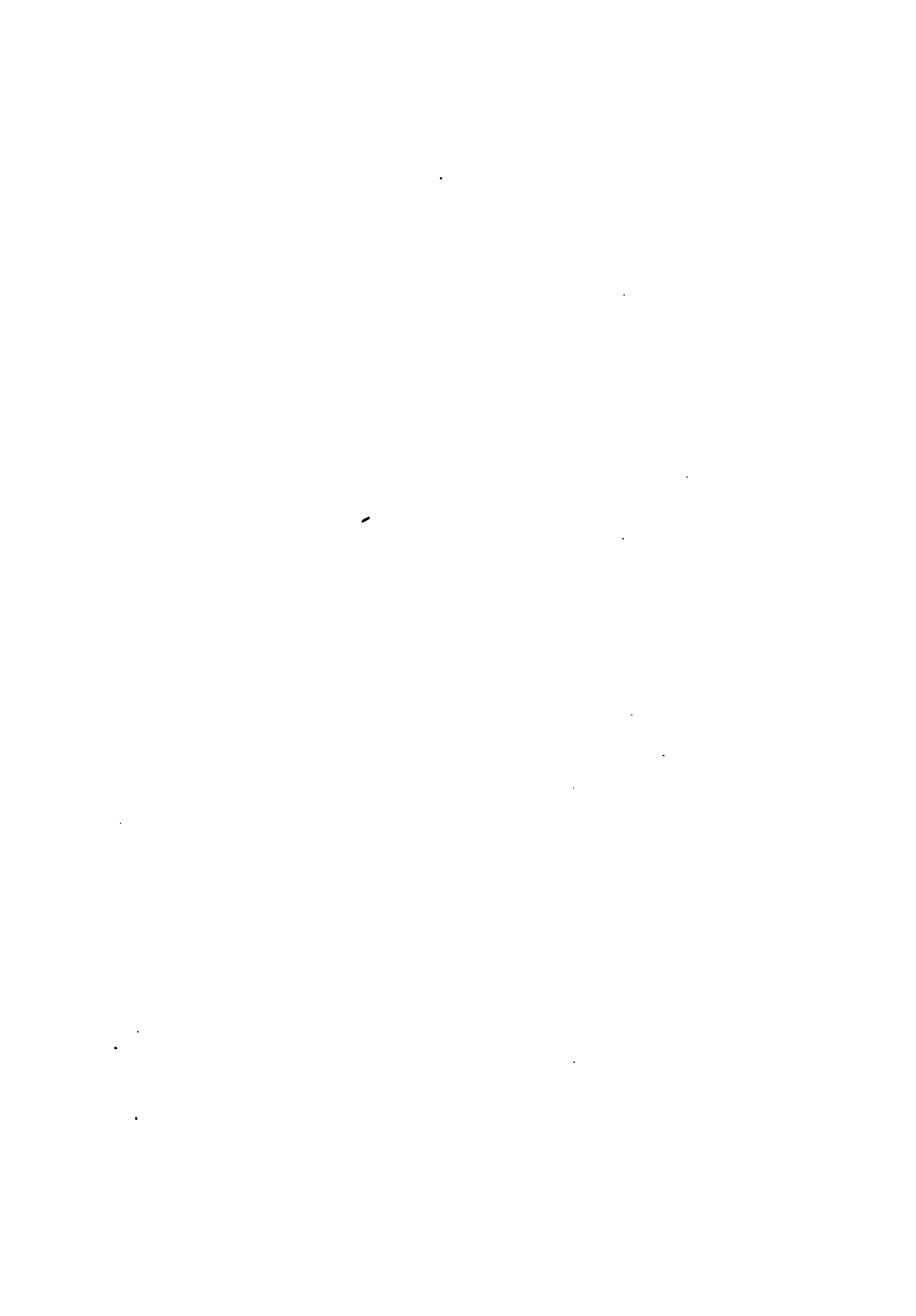


1

Eleanor H. Garrison

Christmas 1877

THE BERTRAM FAMILY



THE BERTRAM FAMILY

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"CHRONICLES OF THE SCHÖNBERG-COT
FAMILY"

NEW YORK:
DODD, MEAD & COMPANY,
751 BROADWAY.
1877.

21428.22.15

✓

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM THE ESTATE OF
MRS. CHARLES ROBERT SANGER
FEBRUARY 19. 1936

CHAPTER I.

MARGARET'S NOTE-BOOK.

WE belong to a family which has always been in the habit of keeping note-books and diaries. Some of them, by what means we have no idea, have got into print. People will print anything, Aunt Katharine says, in these days. So that there being nothing in a thing is no security at all that people will not make anything of it: otherwise, as Eustace says, I might feel safe, my sentences—and probably, therefore, my thoughts—having a peculiar ramifying mode of growth which he thinks might perplex the ablest editors.

However, we have taken every precaution. On the back of my note-book I have written a solemn adjuration to whoever finds it, I being dead, to burn it unopened. Besides, I intend to burn it myself, if it is not delirium tremens (which I believe is not likely, as we take nothing stronger than lemonade), or a railway accident, or hydrophobia; and Monica has promised to burn it for me, if it is. A fire at sea, or at home would probably burn it for me; and I am not likely to be killed on a field of battle, or by fire-damp.

Monica says she does not in the least care, or, at least, she will not then.

And Austin we think secure in the nature of things, that is, of his handwriting, which no one can ever exactly *make out, except he is there from time to time to explain.*

Although I have my doubts about that. Printers, my father says, are in these days so terribly clever; cleverer almost than the Post-office.

We do not even intend our note-books to be read entirely by each other; although we begin them first now when Walter is thinking of going to sea, as a kind of family log-book, that what happens at home every day may not be lost to those who leave home.

We must feel free to write whatever comes into our minds about ourselves and every one else; and then, if we would not like any one else to read it, we shall paste it over afterwards.

Aunt Winifred showed us how to manage this. Her book goes back to the time when she was a girl of fifteen, as young as I am, and our mother was just married, and gone to live in the east of London, in the vicarage where we were all born. And being about our aunts and uncles, and all kinds of venerable people of other generations, before they became venerable, it naturally has had to be pasted over a good deal.

The first note-books in our family of which we know anything were in the German branch—or rather root of it, called Schönberg-Cotta. It is to this side of the house my father says I belong. He says I am altogether Teutonic, not in the least Latin, whatever he may mean by that; not certainly that I am profound, or critical, or “develope anything out of the depths of my own consciousness;” I suppose he means in the Hausfrau aspect.

Then came the Thirty Years' War, and one of our ancestresses married a Mr. Drayton, of Netherby, whose daughter Olive and son Roger took to writing histories of what they did and saw, and, in doing that, of what they themselves *were*, which, I suppose, we can none of us help doing, whether we wish it or not, or whether the *histories are written* for us or by us.

Then there was Mrs. Kitty Trevelyan, whose grandfather married one of his cousins the New England Draytons, and one of whose daughters was the first wife of Mr. Danescombe, of Abbot's Weir, whose son Piers' eldest daughter, Claire Monica Danescombe, married our father's father, and thus became the step-sister-in-law of our great-aunt Katharine Wyse.

Eustace says I am the only one in the family who has a genius for pedigree, but that unfortunately this is unaccompanied by a genius for making it clear to any one else.

Family likenesses reappear, my father says, in all these family chronicles. Although, if what some one says is true, that everybody now is descended from everybody in Edward IV.'s reign, the whole question of family likenesses seems exceedingly extensive and complicated—or, in fact, nowhere.

Sometimes I think that at least we shall be like the people in those family chronicles in one thing, *i.e.* the fact that they did not usually have very much happen to them.

Very much has not happened to us, that is, not things that seem much in the telling; they make rather diaries than annals. The doings are full of interest indeed to us, but the events are small.

Monica and I were wondering the other day what is the reason of this; or rather, Monica was wondering. Monica sees so many more puzzles and wonders in the world than I do.

Things generally do seem to me rather clear and bright on the whole, or, at least, not altogether unmanageable and unimproveable.

Austin says my "natural religion" would have been a "sentimental Deism," and Monica's a "Manichæan Dualism."

In the first place I do not see the difficulties so quickly. *I being housekeeper*, there are so many things

to be done, that the world naturally presents itself to me more in a series of axioms and problems than of theorems.

I am afraid, moreover, it cannot be denied that I am of an easy temper, and have rather a lazy, hazy way of melting perplexities away into moonshine.

Therefore it is fortunate for me that the difficulties I have to do with are difficulties which entirely decline to be dissolved into moonshine, being difficulties which concern my own management of things, and not other people's difficulties in comprehending them; of making certain problems expressed in pounds, shillings, and pence square with other problems expressed in the appetites of a good many healthy, hungry, growing people, and the food and raiment they must have.

Monica was wondering one day why more things do not happen to the people in the chronicles and to us; that is, more *great* things.

We came to two explanations which satisfy me, and which partly satisfied her, a result far more hard to attain.

I think it is partly because great things never do really happen to any one; that is, the great things always come in shoals of countless little things, which look like insignificant atoms as we pass through them, and only seem a shoal when we have passed beyond them.

When the angel set St. Peter free from prison, to St. Peter it seemed just girding on his garments, and putting on his shoes, and stepping through an open door, as he might do any day.

It was only when the angel had left that he saw what a wonderfully great thing had happened to him.

And even the angel of death, Monica said, comes in that way; one little daily habit more given up, one little weakness more recognised, one little step further, *and we step altogether* into the other world.

And partly, too, we think it is because we belong to the middle-class, the sheltered orderly English middle-class. The tragedies are above us and below us; the tragedies of history on scaffolds and thrones; the tragedies of the poor, who are always living on terrible brinks of possibility, of misery and crime.

The mountains and the sea-coasts are always within sight of the tragedies, of the avalanches, and the shipwrecks.

The middle-class lives on the inland plains,—in England at least.

In France, where the mountains have crashed down with earthquake after earthquake, and the ocean has swept over the shores, and the boundaries of human folds have been crumbled and crushed for a century, it may be different.

We, however, scarcely do, as a family, live on those smooth inland plains, out of reach of the sound of the sea, and the sight of the avalanches.

Our father and mother think a clergyman's family are apart from all conventional social classes,—or may be. They sink below their element when they are not.

It is not a question of this or that social level, but of another world with other laws which have nothing to do with our social levels.

“Just,” Monica thinks, “as the laws of chemistry have to do with another aspect of things, and another set of forces than the laws of mechanics. They coexist in the same spaces at the same time, and coincide in the same substances; for instance, electricity, gravitation, and chemical affinity.” (Austin, however, says that comparison will not do, because, if heat is a mode of motion, and sound and light a series of undulations, all the laws are ultimately in the same sphere. But that, he says, leads an immense way. Because ultimately and fundamentally he supposes all human beings also are in the

same sphere, the world being made of human beings as well as the church.)

We have had a great many discussions, Monica, Austin, Eustace, and I, in the old playroom, when our father and mother were quiet in the study, and when the little ones were asleep, down to Walter, who used to discuss everything in the vigorous, puppy-method by growling and biting at it (figuratively), not having yet learned experimentally that there is another side to the world, and to all solid bodies in it.

However, we have been taught (like other Christians, no doubt), that a bishop sinks by becoming a mere nobleman, and a country clergyman by becoming a squire, and a city pastor's family by becoming a household dressing and entertaining as elaborately as any of their congregation.

Fortunately, we were never tempted in that way; for our congregations have not been of the kind that dress and entertain in a way which would excite any one to rivalry. And if they had, we should certainly never have had the money to rival them.

It is father's old parable of the Two Ladders. We have been brought up a good deal on parables, and naturally we like our father's. This was one which our mother heard him tell when she was little Grace Leigh, before they were married.

He said there were two ladders or stairs. One is the great mountain of this world; and the people who are climbing up this ladder have two constant aims, one to keep those below from getting up to them, and the other to reach the next step themselves; whilst those who are not climbing, but are obliged to stand still on a particular step, are always trying to prove that between them and the next step below there is an impassable barrier, while between them and any height above there are nothing but little, insignificant steps. And, after

all, those who have reached the very top know that the summit is nothing but a last step, nothing but an empty platform, and no better for building on than those below, only more exposed to the storms which destroy buildings.

But there is another ladder, like the old dream-ladder Jacob saw, reaching from heaven to earth. And in all that great stair there is no break or chasm except at the top. From the Archangel to the sea anemone, all is one stair of gentle steps, without a break.

It is not indeed a slope, but a stair, and of course some steps may be higher than others. But the only chasm is at the top ; and that is immeasurable, for it is between God and the highest of his creatures. But that chasm has been altogether filled up since the Son of God became a little babe, and grew up to man, and died, and rose again for us ; so that now there is no chasm at all.

But on this stair people are not thinking of climbing, but of worshipping, and of helping up those below.

For these are altar stairs.

And the law which rules the company there is, "Be ye subject one to another." So that the people there rejoice to recognise every distinction, even poor earthly distinctions. The young are subject to the old, and the poor recognise the gifts of the rich ; and those who are not clever delight in the gifts of those who are. They are helping those below, and honouring those above. And so the whole happy company are always moving higher and higher towards heaven, and nearer and nearer God.

For, contempt, our father says, is the meanest and smallest thing in the world, because it keeps any heart in which it reigns from ever growing or learning ; because it never looks up to see anything above it, and only sees what is lowest in things beneath it.

People imagine themselves standing erect, he says,

when they despise others, and looking down, with heads drawn back in a lofty scorn. But, he thinks, to heavenly eyes, the attitude of the contemptuous heart is always a mean stooping, which lowers them below the lowest of the people they despise.

Because there is always something in every one to honour, if we could find it out; but contempt passes by all that could be honoured, to look at that which is lowest.

Contempt and envy are also often, he says, only the outside and inside of the same sin. People profess to despise what they inwardly envy.

From the temptations of that first ladder, we may, even socially, as a clergyman's family, my mother has always said, be especially exempt. And moreover, by the accidents of our family connections and our local habitations, we have not exactly lived in any way on the "inland flats," but at the meeting-places of the mountains and the plains, and the sea and the land, where all the grand scenery is, and where the tragedies occur.


Our family connections range upwards and downwards, to considerable heights and depths, as I suppose those of most English people do. Aunt Katharine says everybody is well-connected and ill-connected in one direction or another. The chief difference, she says, is in the amount of the pedigree that comes to the surface, pedigrees having a tendency to be submerged, below certain levels.

It is, I suppose, because we ourselves live rather near the low-water mark that the lower as well as the higher strata have always been visible and tangible to us. Also, because both our father and mother have a leaning, by nature and grace, towards people in peril of being submerged. Aunt Katharine and my father's mother are in the peerage; their relations at Combe Monachorum,

and Abbot's Weir, and Danescombe have unsubmerged pedigrees traceable to Norman conquerors nearly a thousand years ago, and to Norman Huguenots whose heroic age is nearer at hand; the Felix-Hunters have emerged, not without effort, to very high and dry levels, like little Bo-peep's flock, bringing their tails, *i.e.* pedigrees, behind them, and could, moreover, on the ground of size of fortune (as one of our American cousins said in comparing Windermere with Lake Superior), "swallow up a dozen" such insignificant old country estates as Danescombe, and "not be bigger to speak of." And then there are dear mother's cousins, the Leighs, to whom we seem millionaires, on the simple ground of having always kept out of debt, and who link us with the great army of the "non-effectives," who, after all, my father says, make the real difficulty in all social organization. That is, the people who only get on just as long as you are there to push them on, and no longer.

And then as to local habitation, we have always lived, not figuratively speaking, but literally, next door to our bakers and greengrocers, and not far from our laundresses and charwomen, which gives one a variety of social scenery, and is, I think, far more interesting, and even amusing, than living in uniform rows of unexceptionable houses, with the other people altogether out of sight, unless you go down periodically to visit them as your "district." But that is an advantage our mother always enjoyed, and which many people cannot have, and which a good many more probably would not appreciate.

So that, perhaps, after all, not being on the respectable inland flats, where all the rocks are washed and crumbled into rich, alluvial soil, we have a chance of something happening to us.

But has so little, indeed, happened to us already? 

will look back and see whether, even already, the every days group themselves into anything like a story in the distance.

Scarcely, I think, to me. My distances are too small, and lose themselves too soon in that curious, mythical region where a few facts or a few pictures detach themselves from the mists in a strange, arbitrary way, for which one can see no reason, no reason why they could be clear, or why the rest should be dim; whilst, even of these unveiled facts one is never clear whether they rise in their true proportions or relations.

For instance, the summer-parlour in this our first home, looking on the river. I do not suppose I can reasonably conclude it was always in our childhood bathed in sunshine, or that the view from it was an enchanting combination of Venice and the British Navy, of Turner, Canaletti, and Murillo, the Murillos being endlessly varied and enlivened in the foreground by the little brown beggar children, with dogs to correspond, who climbed from barge to barge, with a freedom from compulsory education, and shoes, which certainly had its attractions.

But to Austin, Eustace, Monica, and me it will always be that and countless things besides; a delicious combination of the admiral's state-cabin in a three-decker (for the end of the room was all window and window-seat;) of a never-ending story-book woven of the adventures of the children, and the loading and unloading of the vessels; and of an illustrated geography, illuminated by the passing up of the ships with the merchandise of every land from the sea to the docks, and the passing down of the barges with their inland freight, from the reedy river-sides and the shadow of the woods, by the Houses of Parliament and the Abbey, where we had been on some rare holiday; whilst there was always at *the other end* of the room sunshine itself, in the person

of our mother, frequently with a cradle, involving the necessity of carrying on our speculations concerning the other children outside in whispers.

In various ways that summer-parlour was our earliest school-room, and will, I think, be interwoven more than any of the later ones with the character of our lives.

Then we were not left to read its lessons only by our own unaided understandings. We had a clue in the stories dear old Fan told us, of the days before Dan broke his leg in climbing the chimney; when she used to convoy him from barge to barge, picking up stray bits of coal and wood in a way perilous to clear ideas of *meum* and *tuum*.

And there were now and then delicious leisure moments in the busy lives of our father and mother when we might pour out on them all the accumulated questions concerning ships and seas and seamen, and other lands, and other children, and other homes, and other worlds, which had grown out of our outlook over the river and its shores.

There Walter drank in the passion for seeing other lands which will take him to sea, and Monica the first suggestions of her pictures and her puzzles, and all of us our interest in other children and other homes, and other lives in altogether other lands from our own.

And there were first painted for us those indelible frescoes in which, consciously or unconsciously, we framed for ourselves our Bible stories, and Pilgrim's Progress, and English history.

Besides the summer-parlour the other great family gathering-place was, and is still, the Long Room below it. This had once been a ware-room, when the house which became the Rectory belonged to a house of business, before the old Rectory was pulled down to make room for the docks.

It could never have served more miscellaneous uses than it did for us.

It was the dry dock for Walter's shipping ; it held the turning-lathe Aunt Winifred gave us. It was the library for our own especial books, the dear old books which we read—Grimm's German stories, with Cruikshank's illustrations, Hans Christian Andersen, sundry odd volumes of Sir Walter and Dickens, and a delightful, unrivalled and entirely unmoral old collection of fairy tales called the Child's Own Book, which had been our mother's and Uncle Harry's one children's story-book. The title-page was gone, and an inexhaustible treasury we thought it, with "Jack and the Beanstalk," the "Seven Champions of Christendom," "Goody Two Shoes," the "White Cat," and all kinds of delights to be found nowhere else, illustrated with very delicate etchings which used to inspire Monica.

The new, nicely-bound books which people gave us on birthdays were kept in the glass bookcase in the front parlour, the parlour into which visitors were shown, fronting the street.

At one time Walter had made the Long Room his laboratory. But our mother, who was not given to interfere more than could be helped, considered this too likely to involve the family in a gunpowder-plot ; and therefore, at whatever loss to science, explosive mixtures were forbidden.

But the chief uses were as a play-room and a theatre ; ball, shuttlecock, lady's toilet, prisoner's base, and all games sufficiently mild for the girls and the little ones were carried on there (the boys of course had cricket and football at school) ; and also our dramatic entertainments, from sieges, enthronements, and dethronements, to mild comedy and charades (scenery being as unnecessary to us as to Shakespeare), went on there ; heroic melodrama prevailing.

And in the winter evenings, when the children were asleep, and the boys' lessons and the girls' sewing were finished, there was held the Long Parliament, when we cowered around the fire-place, and roasted peas and chestnuts, and held and still hold debates.

No sovereign or Upper House was permitted to be present, except now and then Aunt Winifred.

We have been used to discuss everything with the delicious freedom of a debating society whose decisions make no difference.

From the character of Oliver Cromwell to the suffrage of women, all subjects are open to us. And our debates have all the animation of fervent conviction on all sides. They have been no tournaments, but serious battles. No one takes up a side fictitiously, and we are all apt to consider that the side we do take up is the only one which any wholly rational person could take.

Austin, placed at a grammar-school where most of the boys are sons of families in the act of emerging above the social horizon into "society," is apt to be fastidiously reactionary. He is inclined to consider that there has been no quite gentlemanly century since the Reformation, and no Parliament worth sitting in since the Reform Bill. He believes in blood and race.

Eustace, on the contrary, being at one of the old national public schools, is liberal to the most advanced stage; considers that not only the era of aristocracies, but of the baser bourgeois plutocracies, is doomed, that land ought to belong to the government, and government to the people, and that capital ought to be manifestly only in trust to remunerate labour.

Both have an equal contempt for the bourgeoisie, the Philistines—the Whigs, and for mild middle courses and middle classes of all descriptions; but neither Austin's chivalrous opinions as to the privileges of womanhood, or Eustace's enlightened views as to the

rights of women, give either of them quite the respect we sometimes feel due to the opinions of their sisters.

Walter they both agree in repressing, had he been repressible, as a hopeless Philistine, Walter's political theories being chiefly based on the conviction that England as it is, was, and is to be, ever is, and is to be, the model for all nations and all societies, even as our home is the model for all homes, and his sisters are the best girls in the world; that English loyalty is glorious above all loyalty, that English revolutions are incapable of being explosive, just because they are English; in short, that the English army, navy, Church, and Constitution in general, are undeniably the best army, navy, Church, and Constitution in the world, as every one would acknowledge if they only had the honesty to say what, of course, they must think.

On the horrors of uncertainty or suspension of judgment we are all apt to be agreed. Nor have the changes of opinion to which as progressive thinkers and fallible mortals we are liable at all diminished the sense of actual personal infallibility or of absolute certainty as to the stage of opinion reached at the moment.

Monica, I think, is the only one among us who can endure this dreaded suspension of judgment. She has always had that uncomfortable habit of seeing at least two sides to a thing, which renders decision so difficult. We sometimes consider her convictions in a most objectionable state of liquidity, which we frequently warn her means only the last step towards evaporation.

But she retorts by asserting that fluids, especially in a state of evaporation, are the strongest forces in the world, for explosion if repressed, and for traction and construction if governed; that some people think the whole universe must have begun in that state, and that she herself only wants to be allowed to be only at the beginning.

The Long Parliament happens not to have been in session lately on account of the summer evenings and the visit to the sea-side.

And even these few months of recess, especially as we happen to have been meeting a variety of new people, seem to have placed me on a ledge from which I look back on the debates as something some way off.

Granitic certainties, and incontestable infallibilities, and delicious inabilities to see the other side, which have made our convictions so strong, our debates so vehement, our intolerances so hearty, and so unsuspected by ourselves, when shall we come to the point of seeing all sides and enduring all honest differences, and yet not losing the granite and the fire?

Monica thinks that is one of the great problems for the world as well as for us.

In the meantime we have always our twin family institution: the "Monday Popular," otherwise, the *Causeries du Lundi*, to balance the overbalancings of the Long Parliament; the dear Monday afternoons with father, which one of us in turn spends alone with him, to rest him after the fatigue of his busy Sundays. Sometimes the "rest" takes the form of an excursion into the country, sometimes of a prowl about London and its old historical scenes. But whatever the scene, the source of the delight is the time alone with him, when we can tell him everything we want to tell, and ask him everything we want to know, and when we so often find ourselves telling him what we did not think of telling, and asking what we did not know we wanted to learn.

CHAPTER II.

MONICA'S NOTE-BOOK.

IS it round and round, or on and on? In the records we happen to have of our own family, all the stories have been campaigning stories, battles against wrong thoughts of God, or what seemed so, against wrong theories of human life, against wrongs of classes, and wrongs of races; always a conflict with evils, always a pulling against the stream.

And here we are on the inheritance they have won for us, on the ground they fought for and conquered. And what is it?

Around us are workhouses, hospitals, penitentiaries, prisons, and a wilderness of streets which are ceaselessly and most efficiently moulding the material with which workhouses, hospitals, penitentiaries, and prisons are fed.

Around us are also a number of churches and chapels diligently endeavouring to weed out this wilderness, and also unfortunately spending a good deal of their energy in contending against each other's endeavours to do the same thing.

And in the wilderness, and in the folds, are a multitude of human creatures, each one of whom has as completely his own discipline to undergo, his own armour to prove, his own battle to fight, as if he were Adam just stepping out for the first time from Eden between the swords of the cherubim,

And yet, as we believe, Luther won his battle of unveiling the love of God and the freedom of His grace, and Wesley won his battle of awakening the sunken, toiling masses of our England to individual life in God, and Wilberforce and Clarkson won their battle for the slave.

It is a record, not of defeats, but of victories—nay, more, of conquests; and, nevertheless, the world is as much a battle-field as ever, and the Church scarcely more one visible flock.

What must we do?

“Read the Apocalypse,” father says, “and fight.” He said so to me this evening, when I said something like this to him, in one of our dear *Causeries du Lundi*. That is, look at the meaning and result of the warfare *as the victors do in heaven*; and fight the fight, *as they fought it*, inch by inch, without trying to guess the end through the roar and the smoke.

That the old heresies, the old doubts, the old denials should reappear is, he says, not at all to be wondered at.

The devil has nothing new to say. He said the worst he had to say about God to poor Eve, who had no Church history to help her.

He told her that God is not love, and is not true, and that His power is limited by an inevitable necessity which He cannot control; in short, that God is not absolutely God, and that ultimately Fate is God. And in the primitive church he introduced the two heresies which have been fruitful ever since; the assertion that the resurrection is past already, that the golden age is in the past, that the best things are gone from us; and the denial that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh—the denial of the reality of the Incarnation, which is the denial on one side of the possibility of God being understood and brought home to the heart and mind of every man, and on the other of any man being brought back to the likeness of God.

Scepticism in God, scepticism in humanity, scepticism in the reality of the warfare, and in the possibility of victory.

"It is not 'round and round' for the world, or for any of us," he said. "Nor is it round and round, depend upon it, for the enemy. He may well be weary of the conflict, for fresh forces are for ever pouring in, and he has only the old weapons. And history is against him, as well as prophecy."

"But, oh father," I said, "*is* history against 'him? The history of the Church may be; the history of England,—perhaps the history of Europe, and the history of the race as a whole. But the history of these streets? The history of human souls? To say nothing of the history of Africa? To Margaret, little 'Mother Margaret,' as we call her, everything seems right, partly, I know, because she is always doing right, making a halo of kindnesses about her, through which she sees everything and everybody. But to me there seems so much terribly, incurably wrong, wrong with the kind of wrong that never can lead to anything but worse wrong."

"What does that mean," he said, "but that you find the battle is quite real, and that you feel the Christian theory of evil to be true? Evil, according to the belief of the Church, is not a passive substance, but an active principle, or rather an active host of personalities. Victories over it, therefore, are not like victories over matter which when defeated is conquered, and from your enemy becomes your servant; but like victories over an implacable and immortal foe, who, however often defeated, is never conquered, and whatever he becomes will never become your friend. Battle-field after battle-field may be won from him, but the warfare is never over, because the enemy is never won over; he only changes his ground or his tactics. For although the devil has nothing new to say, he has endlessly new ways of saying

it, and an endlessly-changing audience to say it to, so that the old warfare seems new to each generation, the combatants and the battle-field being really new. And that, my child," he continued, "is what makes it worth while to speak, whether in sermons or in books or in Sunday-schools. Each generation has to find its own answers to the old renewed problem, to find its own weapons to meet the new weapons. A long-bow was good in its day, and a Brown Bess was good in its day; but it is as useless to encounter a needle-gun with a Brown Bess, as a Brown Bess with a long-bow."

"The things we say may have been ten thousand times better said for their generation by other men, but their generation is not ours," I said. "I think I see. In whatever form you believe in the Church—if the Church is living, it must have a living voice. The decrees of Nicæa cannot meet the heresies of to-day. Trent must succeed Nicæa, and the Vatican decrees those of Trent."

"Figuratively, I do mean that," he said. "The most learned refutation of the Monophysite heresy, or the most elaborate proof of the doctrine of Athanasius in his own words, would not, for instance, have edified the brewers and bakers and tanners of my congregation, although it did intensely interest the tanners and bakers of Constantinople and Alexandria.

"The most elaborate refutation of justification by works, or of the efficacy of indulgences, would not touch anybody to-day, except the people who enjoy being touched by the refutation of other people's mistakes. Such questions now are fencing-master's questions, not battle questions.

"You will not misunderstand me"—father always talks to us as if we could understand him, and we listen, therefore, until we do—"the form of the questions varies, but the essence remains.

"We need now, as much as ever, I believe, the truth for which Athanasius fought, the Unity of the Godhead, as the Father and the Son and the Spirit, to love and save us, instead of its division into a stern Judge to condemn and a Saviour to rescue.

"You remember the old man who said to me the other day, 'I know all you want to say. There are two Gods. One wants to send me to hell-fire, and the other wants to save me out of it.' That is a heresy to be combated as Athanasius combated.

"We need now, as much as ever, the truth Luther unveiled, that God delights to forgive; is, indeed, a 'Giver, not an Exactor.'

"We need now, as much as ever, the truth John Wesley revived, that each individual human soul must be individually touched and renewed by God, and have its own individual history. And the reception or rejection of those truths does, I think, divide the world into two kingdoms and camps; but these frontiers are not the frontiers of any one Church; they run across all.

"We want our 'Rhine frontiers;' we want that the frontiers of Christendom should be physical, not technical; and if we cannot make them so visibly, we may each of us help to make them so really, by seeing things really."

We stood on Westminster Bridge, one of the most suggestive places to stand on in the world, and not one of the least beautiful, mother and father think. The great river had long left its quiet places among the reeds and woods, and was sweeping down to bear its great burden of shipping to the sea, sweeping past the houses of the great Parliament, which is as old as any European throne, and as full of vitality as any of its progeny east and west.

The long rows of lamps, points on the banks, and quivering lines in the river, drew close to each other in

the long perspective before they were lost in the grey of the dusk and the smoke.

Close to us the black mass of a steamer was relieved in strong contrast against the strongest light we saw, while the signal lights, blue, green, and crimson, pleased me as they had when a child.

We have always been so much more pleased with things which seem beautiful by accident, like stars and trees and boats, than with things made pretty, like fireworks, on purpose to amuse us.

I suppose, from some dim perception, that the beauty of accident is the beauty of necessity, and therefore means something so infinitely more beautiful.

As we stood looking a little knot of people gathered around us in one of the projections, examining the parapet with curiosity.

Looking over into the river as we turned to go home, we passed close to them.

"Anything wrong?" my father asked.

"Only a poor girl who threw herself from the parapet here last night into the river," was the reply.

"No harm done," commented a policeman. "Taken to St. Thomas's."

"Where from?" said my father.

"From some country village," was the answer; and lately it seemed from one of the streets by the river near our own home.

We walked on.

"Oh father!" I said. "There it is! The history of those back streets!"

"The history of souls! my poor child," he said; "and the history of Africa! Ah, Monica, it is long; both are long. It counts by millenniums, and you are not twenty. You scarcely count by tens yet, and I only by scores.

"The history of Africa is indeed long, from those rows

of chained black slaves pictured in the Egyptian tombs to the gangs of slaves with their necks in the terrible yoke, who passed Dr. Livingstone quite lately.

“And the history of each soul is longer.

“What can we say, my child, but that the battle is terribly long, and terribly real; and that I must go and see that poor girl at St. Thomas’s to-morrow, and that I wish I had seen her yesterday? And, therefore, that it makes all the difference in the world, my Monica, whatever we are thinking, whether we *do* things to-day or to-morrow.”

CHAPTER III.

THE MOTHER'S NOTE-BOOK.

THE children have all their log-books, begun for the benefit of Walter, to surround him with an atmosphere of home, when he leaves us for the sea; and they all insist on my having mine.

To me this is not so natural as it seems to be to them; and certainly mine will be written with a large reservation of the privilege of "pasting over," inaugurated by Aunt Winifred.

They belong to a race of chroniclers, and, well or ill, it seems as natural to them to write as to talk.

With me it was otherwise.

Writing, as a means of expression, I have not needed. It has not been my way of uttering myself, or of explaining things to myself.

When I have found especial delight in something God made, or man, I have tried to express it in painting, in form and colour.

When I have found something mysterious and unutterable, or inexplicable, in the life around me, or in my own heart, I have had music; sometimes my own, but far oftener that of some great master.

The discord, the solution, the yearning, the passion, the contrast between what ought to be and what can be, between what might be and what is; the great master whose world was music, and to whose bodily ear that

world was mute, he had felt it, he had uttered it for the world and for me. The great perplexities of the intellect, the conflictings and intertwinings of thought, the great fugue of the history of thought, with its endless repetitions, the old theme recurring at different levels of tone, in different keys ; the pathetic fugue of human life, with its tender reiterations of one theme endlessly varied, does not Bach say it all ?

Then for the dance and sparkle of our lives, the everyday delights or depressions, the episodes of melodious fulfilment, do not Bach, and Handel, and Beethoven, and Mendelssohn, and the Italian masters utter these, utter them as words never can, with those reachings forth and openings into the unutterable which make all our deepest music songs without words ?

And for the deepest things of all, what other utterance can there be ? On earth or by the crystal sea ? Music ; or silence.

" There was silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour."

What else is there in heaven or earth for the depths below the waves of words ? Some words do indeed go deeper than others into the depths, but only because they recognise the depths unfathomable by words.

And, on the other hand, writing, as a means of communication, I have needed so little since the dear day, years ago, when Maurice led me into the old Rectory, and all my thoughts and feelings found their sure depositary and their living response in him.

What did I need of a book to confide my thoughts to ? Who would talk to a mirror, who has a living love to say everything to, and to understand instinctively everything that cannot be said ?

At first there were the meals alone together, every meal (may I say it reverently ?) having something sacramental in it, an outward visible sign of inward spiritual

grace ; every meal a knitting together of some precious fragments of the treasure of the common past that was growing behind us, or a setting forward on some fresh work in the future.

The breakfasts and the suppers most of all. Is it a fond superstition ?

I used to like to think that the two especially consecrated meals were the supper and the breakfast ; the Holy Eucharistic close to all the "breakings of bread" in which He had been known to them—the "Last Supper," which was the first and the beginning of all our feasts and festivals.

And then the "breakfast" (Maurice says it was a breakfast) when on the shingly shores of the lake of Galilée, the Sacred Face was seen again, the voice, never to be forgotten, was heard again in the glory of the Syrian dawn ; and He welcomed them to the fisherman's meal, the bread and fish broiled on the little fire, and spoke to St. Peter of the past and the future, and said He knew he loved Him, and bade him "feed my lambs," and "follow me."

"Feed my sheep" and "follow me." The words seemed to echo at our breakfasts as mightily and as individually as of old, although our table was spread beside no sparkling seas and before no sunlit hills, but looked on a narrow, noisy street. At least we had the little "fire of coals" for scenery ; and in the street we had, what is infinitely more than all scenery, His lambs and His sheep.

And then we surely had His voice. And imperfect and feeble as we were, I think He knew that we loved Him, and said to us also, "Follow me."

Yes, surely, He knew we loved Him, and when He had to rebuke us, He was sure to do it for us not less tenderly or less truly than for St. Peter, only recalling the threefold failure, to give him opportunity for

the threefold confession, and hope of thousandfold reparation.

They were brief, those solitary breakfasts together. For from the beginning our lives were always busy, full to the brim, and not seldom a little over.

Our household, to begin with, was not one that rolled smoothly of itself, like machine households; indeed, it did not go on at all without a good deal of looking after. We began with Fan and her brother Dan, and a deaf old woman, who had once kept the coffee-shop at the corner, but had not exactly made it answer, which we thought, after experience, was not inexplicable. Mrs. Mowlem did not drink—we felt nearly sure she did not drink—and she did not steal—we felt satisfied she did not steal in any way it was our duty, as English citizens, to take cognizance of; only her “rheumatics” being sometimes, of course, worse than usual, she might now and then be tempted to take “something a little comfortable,” and her two orphan grandchildren being not always very fully fed by the poor aunt who took care of them, occasionally, I suppose, she did think it was no harm to take a few scraps to them, and I have no doubt she considered it was only what she might quite legitimately have eaten herself, and we would have been most happy to spare. Which, of course, we would. Only it would have been pleasanter for us, and better for Mrs. Mowlem, if she had asked.

It was strange how the whole problem of the government of the world was epitomized for us in Mrs. Mowlem. For Mrs. Mowlem was not the sole resident in our kitchen, so that we were not able to look on our domestic arrangements as chiefly a reformatory for Mrs. Mowlem. There were Dan and Fan; Fan, with a keen sense of justice, a generous feudal devotion to our service, which it was dangerous to wound; and Dan, from early training, and perhaps from Irish descent, not

without some instinctive leanings to an ideal commune, as a preliminary to which a few stray irregular leakings from the full stores into the empty were rather anachronisms, an unseasonable righting of wrongs, anticipating the ideal era, the good time coming, than serious wrongs in themselves. Indeed, it was only the fact of our stores being far from over-full that made Dan consider such things an offence at all.

"I won't see it any longer!" came once from Fan's voice in the area as I sat writing at the open window.

"They are not so mean as to mind the poor children having them crumbs from the rich man's table," replied Dan. "I know master and mistress better than that."

"A whole mutton-pasty is not a crumb," retorted Fan; "and you have no right to call master bad names, as if he were the rich man in the parable. I am sure they don't fare *sumptuously* every day, nor dress in purple. We don't even have dessert, except when Miss Winifred comes, and then only oranges. And Missis has only one silk dress."

On that ground Dan gave in, and some defensive measures were apparently about to be concerted between them, the precise nature of which I never knew (except that Fan protested that certain excursions to the public-house for gin must be discontinued), as I naturally thought it a breach of confidence to keep the window open any longer.

It was a little hard to be in the most distant way suspected of "meanness." But a whole world of social and political problems seemed opened before me by this debate, to say nothing of deeper and wider questions still, as to the government which is in no sense in our human hands.

In the evening I confided these experiences to Maurice.

"It would never do to send away Mrs. Mowlem

She would go from bad to worse, whilst with us she might rise from the good there really is in her to better."

"Yes," he said, "*there* is the question as regards what socially we call the 'criminal classes,' and, theologically, the sinner."

"And it will never do to let Fan think it does not matter, to let her sense of justice be dulled and her fidelity unappreciated."

"*There* is the question of the treatment of the criminal with reference to the respectable portions of society, especially the portion of society which keeps itself respectable and honest by a sore struggle; and, again, of how to correct the unjust, so as not to wound, in the just, that abhorrence of injustice, which once lost is a loss of moral muscle in the great warfare for which nothing can compensate."

"And yet it would never do to let Dan think that helping the needy from rich people's larders is a foretaste of the millennium, the Ten Commandments only beginning at the point where he considers the agrarian distribution ought to end."

"Yes; *there* is the most difficult question of all—how to help the wrong-doers without discouraging the waverers."

"It is very difficult. It is the mixing of the questions, moral and social, that makes it so difficult; and the mutual relations of the people; of the wrong-doers, the altogether-right, and the doubtful. If it were only Mrs. Mowlem stealing cold mutton, that would be easy. She could go."

"And steal some one else's cold mutton."

"No, I suppose she should be shut up and prevented stealing at all. But then there are the grandchildren, which does a little modify the thing to one's heart; and then there is Mrs. Mowiem herself, who must, if

possible, be brought right; and even if that were all, it would be comparatively easy. She might stay and be reformed. But then there are Dan and Fan. Is it not difficult? Is it not all difficult?"

"Is it any wonder," he replied, "that the poor laws are difficult to administer so as not to hurt every one who has to do with them? that when you have to deal with thousands of Mrs. Mowlems, and, thank God! with tens of thousands of Fans, and with hundreds of thousands of Dans, and deal with them by machinery instead of by human pity, workhouses and prisons are not all we could wish?"

"Is it any wonder, my Grace," he added in a deeper voice, "that we do not quite comprehend the government of the universe, where what we may each *become* is never lost sight of in what we *are*?"

"No wonder, indeed," I said. "But practically what are we to do with our own little bit of government—with Dan and Fan, and Mrs. Mowlem?"

And we came to the conclusion that the right thing to do in this case was first of all to throw aside all vanity as to Dan's possible misinterpretation of our doings; then summarily to forbid all excursions for gin, and, if necessary, to supply it medicinally ourselves; then to take Fan heartily into confidence, to make her understand that we knew Mrs. Mowlem was not all she ought to be, but that we wanted to help her to become better, and to let Fan make as much of this clear to Dan as she could; then, by keeping temptation out of Mrs. Mowlem's way, and by the slow conviction of our kindness and truth, slowly to distil into her own mind and heart something of a sense of love and justice which she could not bear to wrong; and so of the Love which alone is supremely just, because it alone is perfectly loving.

"For, Gracie," Maurice said, "what have we come to

live and work here for, but to bring into the midst of all these marred and ruined homes, and these homeless atoms, the great Divine institution and remedy of a Christian home?"

That was indeed Maurice's purpose and mine. He thinks that is the parochial ideal of the Church of England: her clerical unit, not a single priest, but a pastoral home—a home existing to be a blessing to all around.

Not that he means that a clerical home should be different from other homes; only that it may be especially, and in difficult places, and perhaps representatively and fully, what all homes should be; going down, as all are not able to do, into crowded city parishes, from which other cultivated homes have gradually withdrawn to pleasanter places and fresher air; or remaining all the year in lonely country parishes, from which other cultivated homes, for a considerable part of the year, are emptied into London, or into watering-places, or into foreign travel. I think we have tried to do and to be this, in our measure, for the last twenty years. And I am sure we have had as much success as we could have hoped.

Not the kind of success that shows well in reports. But just a few marred homes mended and raised and brightened, and made nurseries of good instead of evil; a few children trained to begin good homes of their own; a few homeless people linked to the better homes, for the benefit and consecration of both.

Difficult things to show or see, in any impressive way, in the aggregate.

Building can be definitely measured and defined. But the history of growth is more complicated, especially when a good deal of the gardening has to be pruning, and a good deal of the growth has been the wrong way.

Besides, our own home itself was not ideal. A good deal of the gardening there also had of course to be

pruning, because a good deal of the growth had a tendency to be the wrong way.

Maurice's clerical unit of the Church of England is an unit by no means always at unity in itself, its factions being composed of the countless vigorous varieties of English character, and liable to the countless variations of English ecclesiastical and religious thought. As we have experienced. For not only were those breakfasts and suppers together brief in themselves; there were very few of them in which we continued to be alone together.

Babies came to be fed and clothed, and very soon these developed into vigorous little individualities, who had to be taught how to feed and clothe themselves and each other; and meantime and always I had literally to be head nurse.

Mrs. Mowlem's was not the influence one would have chosen for educational purposes; besides, she had enough to do with providing for the lower regions of the house, and the lower wants of the household. Dan's chief occupation was the care of the horse and phaeton, which Aunt Katharine absolutely insisted on keeping for us; and Fan had everything else to do.

And we never had any conventional nursery.

In French households this absence of nursery is, I believe, the ordinary state of things. But then French families seldom amount to seven. And the vivacious French people has never felt the necessity of developing its language into the words "boy" and "baby." There are volumes of history, I think, in those two words, baby and boy. Other nations have found it sufficient to indicate those two conditions of human life by words which simply imply progressive stages, gradually developing into those that follow, with no necessity for sharp lines of demarcation. With us they almost mean distinct states of being. A baby ceases to be a baby, but being "baby,"

is submissively enthroned as such by all around it. A boy may indeed be an "old fellow" to his contemporaries; but who else does not forcibly recognise the justice of the classification which marks him off from the rest of mankind?

An English household without a nursery, pervaded, therefore, not by incipient men and women, or even incipient children, but by babies and boys, does involve a good deal to parents; or if not, certainly involves a good deal to guests, of a kind apt to make a guest-chamber unnecessary.

Fortunately for me, our little Margaret very early manifested the protective qualities which constituted her "Mother Margaret;" and Austin, our eldest boy, had a "knack" with babies and a delight in them, which, being naturally reciprocated, lightened many a difficult hour for us.

I have often noticed this among our poor neighbours—a good-humour and protective patience in the nursing of the boy-brothers scarcely to be found with the sisters, partly no doubt because nursing with the boys is a recreation and an occasional privilege, whilst with the girls it is continuous and professional.

There was, of course, weariness for me in all this. I suppose I grew old faster, and the children, at all events the girls, grew up faster, not in the priggish but the womanly sense. And at all events it made me understand and feel the difficulties of the poor mothers around me, who have to be housemaid and laundress, and cook and nurse, all in one, and wife and mother through it all, and certainly often without any one at all like Maurice to help them, and make allowance for everything.

Not a few of the beautiful schemes Maurice and I had planned for the parish had, I confess, to be reluctantly abandoned

I could not have many classes and meetings, or even

many of those social entertainments we had planned. Indeed, there were years in which it seemed as if I could do nothing but just watch that the home went right (which it didn't always), and do such stray kindnesses to one and another as a little experience of sickness and difficulty and something like poverty (as far as one dares call any state poverty in which a roof and daily bread and raiment are secure), made come helpfully from me.

But perhaps good came, even out of that.

People knew how much we cared to help. And those who had a little time and money and strength to spare, one by one, seemed to gather around us. Maurice says one great use of a centre, is to be a *point of rest*; something which is *always there*; a fixed point which other things may radiate from. If the centre have light and heat, is in itself a sun or a hearth-fire, light and warmth will necessarily and naturally radiate from it, and heat being a mode of *motion*, all kinds of activity will necessarily flow from it.

And really, looking around now, and seeing how other people are helping and working around us, it seems as if our little imperfect home had been something of this kind. Certainly it is not anything I have done with that conscious aim which has been the cause of this. But Maurice says the sure sign of natural incapacity for ruling, domestic, clerical, or political, is an incapacity for being quiet oneself and *letting other people work*, and get the credit of the work when it is done: a restless craving to do everything ourselves. Just, he also says, as a sure sign of incapacity for teaching is an incapacity to *let other people think*; a restless straining to be always forcing in material.

It is, perhaps, therefore fortunate, that circumstances have rendered that kind of restlessness impossible for me.

The two agencies, therefore, on which we personally

have had chiefly to rely, have been, after all, the old undying agencies; the Church and the Home; the home around which other homes gathered, the Church which is the home round which we all gather, homes and homeless;—and both of these not ends, but means. Means and agencies for gathering all the redeemed human creatures around us to the Centre, which is not a poor extinguishable hearth-fire, but the Sun; to the Sacred Heart which is the home of all human hearts; to the Father who is the Father of all the families, and of the One Family in heaven and earth.

Without that good tidings of great joy to give, how indeed could we have dared to place ourselves on the shore of this great ocean of sin and sorrow?

It would have been like saving people from shipwreck, without a shore to land them on, or bread or water for their hunger and thirst.

Our Lord has called us to better work than that. Not that other work has not grown up around the Church, as well as around the home; but not so much in the direct way we once planned.

There is the temperance reading-room and coffee palace, and, growing out of these, various associations for self-help and mutual help among working men; there are the schools, and, growing out of the schools, classes for higher instruction; there is our sister Winifred's parish-garden and market-cart, and Aunt Katharine's farm from which the sick are supplied with sick-room comforts; and there is the cottage home for convalescents.

But more and more Maurice has felt that his own work chiefly vibrates between the Church and the homes. He feels that the hearts of all men and women are too deep to be satisfied with anything but God, and that the hearts of the men and women around us here have been too rudely rent by fierce temptation and undeniable

trouble to fancy they are satisfied with anything else, as the prosperous sometimes may.

He thinks also that there is no excitement strong enough to rival the terribly-real excitements of low pleasure, but the excitement of genuine heart-religion.

He does not believe in Temperance Champagne, or mild little draughts of art and science, to attract from gin and its correlatives.

Therefore his whole soul is chiefly given to making religion itself interesting to the people, religion in services and sermons in church, and thence flowing to the home.

He thinks the pulpit might still be one of the greatest means of civilising as well as of regenerating the world, of civilising by regenerating.

He has, of course, supreme faith in his message. He never apologizes for Christianity. He intensely believes in it, for this life and every life, for his own heart and every heart, for his own mind and every mind, from our Fan's to Milton, or Newton, or an Archangel. He is persuaded that Christianity is the great universal medicine, and also the true wholesome daily bread, for all humanity. He is supremely interested in it himself; in its history, its transformations, its creations, its adaptations to all forms of civilisation, all types of character, all ranges of thought.

His sermons are to him a kind of crowning point of this thinking and living. Everything he reads and sees and feels and thinks goes into them; and he reads and sees and feels and thinks in very many directions. And he preaches them to those whose homes he knows. And then he delights in the Church services. To him they are simply, fully, really drawing close to God;—crowning the life of service by the vision of faith; first of all in the Holy Communion, and then in every act of prayer and praise.

But what is the good of my writing about Maurice? Indeed, what is the good of my attempting to write at all, while I have him to speak to and to help?

And what is the good of my writing about the children, when they are always wanting every minute I can spare, to talk to them?

And there is his voice, and my name!

And every time I hear it, is it not full of the tone with which he welcomed me across the threshold twenty years ago, "My dove that has come to me once more across the snow!"

CHAPTER IV.

WINIFRED'S MOAN-BOOK.

SO here I am in precisely the very last place I should have chosen, a household of women in a "suburban Paradise." One of the 6 $\frac{1}{10}$ ths in every hundred too many English women! I who would have liked to have "rampaged" about the world, or gone into some of its depths and lived there, like Maurice and Grace! here I am once more in Aunt O'Brien's unexceptionable Paradise, without even having the smallest duty or authority to dress and keep it, in any sense, inside or outside!

Ah! of all the dreary things in the world, the dreariest is to live in a Paradise with only Eves (except the gardener), with the terrible possibility of having one's own way in everything, and with the conviction that this playing at paradise deludes no one inside it; that it only deludes the poor dear "Fans" who look over the paling from outside into it; with the knowledge, moreover, that there is an interesting wilderness outside which one can only get at by railway.

And more; but, ah! dare I say to myself all I feel about it? Yes, it is always better, at least for me, to say the worst to myself. Is not that the very *raison d'être* of this little book? An *emptied* Paradise! a Paradise sheltered from no deadly wind of the wilderness, and full of a mortal *emptiness* which the wilderness outside is too

toilsome and tumultuous to know; a Paradise which death has swept bare of its best, again and again, and which life has swept bare of its illusions; where one was happy as a child; where one has to play at being happy, now, at the risk of being thought ungrateful; with Uncle O'Brien no longer here to torment me, and my father no more here to live for, as in those few precious years we had him at home, after my mother's death in India; and Harry Leigh who would have taken me with him into as much toil and uncomfortableness as I could have wished, away alone at his appointment in the West Indies. If indeed he *is* there. For it must be two years now since Grace has heard.

Was I quite right about Harry Leigh?

Was any one quite right about it?

And out of so many things not quite right, how can I persuade myself something quite right for any one is ever to come?

My father would never consent to our engagement. So tender in all things to me, in that he never wavered. He said there was an unconquerable unsteadiness in Harry's character to which with his consent I should never sacrifice my life. And then everything my father said during the five years he lingered with us had the sacredness of last words in it. At least it was so to me; perhaps wrongly; for, after all, every word must at last have its real weight in what it is, not in when or how it was said.

And I always thought I could have just given that steadfastness to Harry; not, I mean, by anything especially steadfast in me, but simply by caring for him first, and being always with him.

But between the two duties (they both seemed duties to me), I chose that which to me was the hardest. I clung to the dying love, and let the living love go from me.

I suppose at the time I did not think I was letting it really go from me; but had some fond vision that my faithfulness to the duty that was difficult would be rewarded by the faithfulness of the love I dared not take, and that one day that other dearest duty would become mine, unforbidden.

But Harry could not read under the new writing the old text which I now know too well to be indelible.

He thought me proud and heartless. At least I fear he did. It must have looked like it. He did not certainly say so. He only said, he had never really dared to hope I could care for a "blundering desultory fellow like him."

And he had been blundering and desultory. I do not know how it was; but he certainly had.

He had not done as well in anything as every one thought he might. It seemed as if some infirmity of will just came at the last moment and prevented his reaching the goal. I often think it must have been mere infirmity of health.

He cared for so many things, and did so many things well; just what would have been charming and clever in a woman. But then came those inevitable tests which always prove men's work, when it is work they have to live by. And it all failed.

He began with studying to be a surgeon. But, just at the last, he had an illness which broke off his preparation for the examination. And, in this illness, an old passion for painting came over him, and his pictures began to sell, at first so successfully that the old boyish hope of the home with me seemed for the first time to come out of the region of fairy-tale into that of possibility.

And for three days we lived in that hope together.

It was in Maurice's and Grace's home. We did not say any definite words of promise to each other. But it came into the consciousness of both of us that all our

past had belonged to each other; that words of mine had been his inspiration, and work of his my ideal.

"Dr. Dee's life in the brougham, attending ladies with nerves, was never your ideal!" he said, "although you did comfort Grace by reminding her that St. Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles between his professional visits."

"Not Dr. Dee's exactly, and the brougham, and nervous London ladies!" I said. "But a country doctor among the poor, scouring the country at all hours and in all weathers on horseback, traversing snowy moors at midnight to succour a poor woman," I added, rather reluctantly, "that, I think, is a life as near heroic possibilities as any now to be lived."

And so I always shall think.

However, that was not Harry Leigh's calling, then. I believe he felt Art really his vocation. He had studied hard,—at the more general science of his profession. His scientific anatomy and botany would now come in, as he thought, to a higher use, at least, to the use he could best make of them.

I tried to feel so, but I could not.

I suppose unconsciously, the ideal of the life I had thought was to be his had taken possession of me as the highest and manliest, that is, the most Christian.

To heal men's sicknesses seemed to me such a glorious Christ-like life, such a beautiful way of taking up our portion of one another's burdens.

Harry said there were other ways of healing men's sicknesses. That all true Art was an art of healing, bringing balms of beauty to weary men and women, melting the crust of selfishness by raising the soul into fresher air and freer space.

He thought all things that brought unselfish enjoyment were among the very highest and most necessary things. *Play* was the great question of the day—how to

inspire "healthful play." Men and women and little children were never right unless their play was healthy; and play to be healthy must be hearty, must be as real and vigorous as work. Nature supplied this to all who could live with her, yielding her stores of joy, however, to none except those who sought them with all their hearts, in climbing Alpine heights or in dredging deep seas, or in clearing forests, in working in some way, with her or for her. And Art was, he thought, in a great measure, the Nature of cities, man's bringing home to people in towns the glorious things of God.

"God made the country, and man made the town," was only one side of the truth.

God made the Holy City, the Heavenly Jerusalem, as well as the Paradise of Eden; and the City, not the Garden, was the consummation and the crown of humanity.

True, that City was also a Paradise with trees of life and healing. And man's cities were certainly at present neither Paradises nor New Jerusalems.

But the aim and type of our cities should be that Heavenly City.

And the work of Art now, he thought, is to bring the Paradise, with the trees of life, into the cities.

Faith brings the Presence which is the temple. But Art is to bring the Paradise with the leaves of life for the healing of the nations.

So Harry thought, and so he persuaded me. And for those three days, the view from Maurice's summer-parlour seemed to me to have something of Eden in it, coal-barges included.

The great river sweeping down from green inland places to the sea, sweeping up twice a day against the current in sea-like waves, with the millions of busy English men and women gathered on its banks, the city of ten thousand homes (and how many homeless!), it

would, indeed, be something to bring such a tide of beauty from sea and land into its homes.

And for three days that dread of being becalmed, of having to lead an easy, stagnant, comfortable existence unruffled by a care, which has often haunted me, vanished utterly!

A cottage in summer, on wild sea-shores, or in lonely moorlands, lodgings in winter in some delightful unfashionable picturesque nook of London, some quaint court in the city, some corner perhaps even under the very shadow of the Abbey, became a tangible possibility; humble little furnished rooms which we, just *we*, were to make a home.

And then I went back again to my father. And he would not hear of it.

And then Harry's pictures began to sell less freely. He had been painting as thoroughly and honestly as he could, and the conventional sale ceased. The dealers said he was not well known enough for that kind of thing.

To keep a crotchet, they asserted, you must have made a name.

And nothing would move my father. He had scarcely got to the point of considering painting pictures a profession at all, at least in its earlier stages. And a man who turned from one thing to another was his abhorrence.

He said I might do as I liked, he would not alter his will; but I should certainly shorten his life.

And shortening of life was no fanciful threat with him. Death was always hovering too visibly near him.

I believe, if I had left him, I should have shortened his life; and Harry's life and mine were still beginning.

I could not leave him.

Nor could I promise Harry to do anything he did not ~~wish~~ wish when he was gone. We had never been engaged

formally. To engage myself would be, I felt, like drawing some iniquitous Post Obit in my father's life. And I thought Harry would understand.

But he did not understand.

We had one more conversation in Maurice's summer-parlour.

But something which I must think perverse (perhaps it is a perversity common to men which women do not understand) seemed to possess him, and he would not listen.

He said at first I was sacrificing him to miserable conventionalities. But that he retracted. He said at last I was noble and self-sacrificing; only, as he had always known, and as of course my father and every one else felt, infinitely above him, "a desultory creature with half capacities for half-a-dozen things, and enough for none."

"He was not even a wreck. He had not made one voyage. He was an unfinished lumbering hulk, wasting in the docks, and he would take care my life should not be wasted in tugging and towing such worthless lumber into port."

So he left me. And certainly Maurice's summer-parlour has never seemed like Eden since to me.

And that is what the two human creatures I loved best in the world have made of my life for me.

"My life!" The words recall me to my senses. I am surely not about to drift into the ranks of the "unemployed females" who go about moaning "My life, and what shall I do with it?"

My life! that is God's. He will know what to do with it.

The "hands which come from darkness, moulding men," will find what to do with it.

My life!

I have no "life" of my own. I have only to-day.

Ah! it was a great many years ago, now, that I learned, on my birthday, "*We love Him because He first loved us.*" The love that *never began, and is always beginning.*

And I have never never found that fountain fail.

There! I have made my moan in my dear old moan-book, and I am better for it already.

And, after all, perhaps some good did come out of it for Harry. He returned to his first profession, and passed well, and got an appointment as a ship's surgeon, and went abroad and has worked hard there. And sometimes I think he can surely never forget Maurice's summer-parlour any more than I can.

Often, I *know* he cannot. It is a pity certainly to make the six extra women in any hundred seven by a misunderstanding of that kind.

But then I am persuaded there is not one of them really extra.

If there were no extra women, what would become of the extra work?

Indeed, altogether, six extra women seems to me a very inadequate allowance for each hundred. Where, else, could all the housemaids and parlour-maids and cooks come from? all the prison matrons, governesses, lady superintendents of everything? all the nurses, and above all the one unappropriated old maid for every one to appropriate on every emergency in every family?

I begin to think we are really quite inadequately provided with extra women; to feel quite overwhelmed with the proportion of the world's work likely to fall on me as one of the six, or even as the fractional sixteenth; especially as not a few of the hundred are sure to be Maurice's "non-effectives," and thus to provide extra work for the rest. The only difficulty, I suppose, is, *that the six extra are not properly told off to each*

hundred. The thing to aim at is, to get the extra women and the extra work to fit together.

“Distribution!” as Uncle O’Brien used to say—“distribution is the one difficulty of the world.” And distribution seems exactly the thing left to human beings to accomplish, and not yet accomplished successfully.

Trade is, of course, all distribution. The world is not arranged like an old-fashioned kitchen-garden, with the necessaries in rows easy to get at, and the luxuries decoratively fringing the borders. On the contrary, most things seem scattered, or hidden away, as if finding, and getting at what we want were to be a great part of our education. Scattered on burning tropical plains, where half of the race cannot live; hidden in black pits and mines where it seems no one ought to live.

And if our food and raiment are so difficult to get, is it any wonder that the daily bread of our hearts and minds is as hard to find? If coals are to be dug out for our common firesides at such tremendous cost of life and labour, are the capacities and work of women likely to be unearthed, and fitted for use more easily? Ah, if one could only help a little in bringing together the empty spaces, and the crowds thronging each other to suffocation! the lives withering for want of work, and the good ground lying waste for want of hands to till it! the houses with empty spare rooms, and the lungs, physical and moral, stifling for fresh air!

Communism; Uncle O’Brien would have said. Yes; communism, if the distribution were forced and mechanical. Christianity, if the distribution is the voluntary service of love.

For, in the end, what does the whole Christian Church exist for, but that we should bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Him who bore our sins and carried our sorrows, and bears and carries them still?

And with all her external divisions, what is the real

human and divine work of the Church everywhere, and what throughout the ages has it ever been, and what throughout the ages will it ever be, but just this ?

That is, if we admit we are complex beings, burdened in body, soul, and spirit, with the burdens physical, moral, and spiritual, which press on each, and which **only** remedies physical, moral, and spiritual, can reach.

* * * * *

CHAPTER V.

SO all the note-books began. But the rush of the nineteenth century was too strong for them. None of them continued but Winifred's "moan-book;" at least in the form in which they began.

The boys never wrote any at all.

The mother's has already ended, as all things with her are apt to end, in Maurice.

Margaret's ended in this way.

"I cannot conceive how it was people could continue note-books, or diaries, or chronicles year after year.

"The busy days, full of life, about which there is most to say, are just those in which one can never find time to say it.

"The only thing which could make one go on would be if, like Eugénie de Guérin, one could surround a brother with home, when away. But then one wants to send it off as soon as one can; and a quite recent letter seems to have just a touch of speaking in it which makes it have a fresher scent of home than any journal. And all the people concerned in these diaries do seem to find a great deal of leisure, writers and readers, which is exactly what we never have, and are, thank God, never likely to have.

"I am afraid I must give it up."

And Monica came to a pause, thus.

"I cannot get on with it at all.

"If I feel anything intensely, the last thing I can do is go and write it straight down in a book. And if I could, of course, no one could be allowed to see it. When one *is* feeling, one does not know what one is feeling. It is all a whirlpool, a fermentation, a crystallization. And no one can hurry crystallization, as we used to find with the alum-baskets when we were children.

"And when one is praying, or giving thanks, one is praying or giving thanks *to God*.

"He is always there to hear.

"One might as well be deaf and dumb, if one has to write everything one has to say.

"And to be deaf and dumb with God, would be the most terrible desolation in the world!

"There is nothing left for me to write, then, but thoughts. And that, I suppose, would help one, if one had time.

"Thoughts clear and shape themselves, not like crystals, and feelings, by being still, but like tangled skeins by being unwound; by being tossed about among other people's thoughts, or among other thoughts of our own.

"But different things help different people to speak.

"Three things have generally helped me most.

"One is: sitting in a boat above Richmond, in a quiet part of the river, when father and Walter were rowing, and I was steering, and there was just enough for me to do, for no one to want me to talk, and there was movement without toil, yet movement which I was helping. A sense of power seems to come to me then, to steer one's thoughts through all sorts of currents.

“ Another is : looking out from Margaret’s and my little bedroom window over the river, when Margaret is asleep, when I can be quite still, as the stars above are (or seem) ; and between the stars and me is the noiseless sailing of the clouds in the sky, and the steady rush of the great river past the silent shipping.

“ And the last of all is: the dear Saturday afternoon walks with my father, when I can speak out my doubts and puzzles to him, and be sure they will do him no harm, and be nearly sure he will help me at all events to see a glimpse of a way in which one day one may get out of them.

“ And then when I come to something like an answer I want either to go and paint it into a picture ; or, else, to go and help some one else out of *their* puzzles, which is, I hope, my vocation for teaching ; that, and the necessity for earning one’s daily bread, which father says is happily God’s unmistakable vocation for nine-tenths of our race.

“ Our great family debates have not helped me much in thinking, our debates in the Long Room under the summer-parlour, which we call the Long Parliament. At least they have seldom helped me to do anything but find out the difficulties.

“ Margaret and the others seemed generally so much more easily to reach what they feel the answers. And they all seem to turn about their thoughts so much more quickly than I can.

“ Nor does writing help me much.

“ It seems too much all for oneself.

“ We have, I think, had it too much engrained into us that we are members of a living Body. Nothing is our own, not even our thoughts ; so that if one has anything good to say it is better to say it to our Sunday-school class, or to some lonely sick person, or to any one it would help, than to shut it up in a book,

which one may probably never have time to look at again.

“Of course, thoughts are not always *shut up* in books ; they can be more helpful there than almost anywhere ; or there would be no books at all.

“But mine would be ; and so my book is likely to be a blank, unless I occasionally note down the thoughts at night in the rowing-boat, or the *Causeries du Lundi* with my father.”

So Margaret's note-book diverged into letters to Walter, and Monica's was reduced to occasional reminiscences of the Monday afternoon walks, and to such results of thinking as she cared to note down.

And this history has to be filled in at present from other sources.

CHAPTER VI.

WINIFRED'S MOAN-BOOK.

IT is good to be staying with Maurice and Grace ~~once~~ more in the dear old parsonage by the river.

People talk of travelling on the Continent being a thorough change of mental and moral atmosphere. But that depends on whether you get into the mental and moral atmosphere of the countries you travel in, which seems to me a far more difficult thing than the majority of us imagine.

In ordinary travelling in Switzerland, your change of "mental and moral atmosphere," as I have known it in travelling with Uncle and Aunt O'Brien, consists in hearing a good deal of loud guttural German which reminds one of Charles V.'s verdict on the language, a great deal of English, certainly not as pure as that which we ordinarily hear at home, and in making a few acquaintances carefully selected by their approach to the standard set up at home. The whole country, as we used to see it, was an elaborate stage for the entertainment of Europe, with scenery, — yes, indeed, with scenery glorious enough to sweep all the vulgarity of the stage into oblivion! But scenery, landscape, is not "moral and mental atmosphere."

That is more changed by spending one fortnight, as we did ~~once~~ when Aunt O'Brien was ill, in a little village in Brittany, than by years of ordinary hotel travelling.

We got a glimpse, then, of how the people live, of what they believe, of how they believe it.

But there is no change of "moral and mental atmosphere," I think, like getting heart and soul into the life of another home, as I do by staying with Maurice and Grace; a busy home full of intense life, young and middle-aged, and pervaded by all kinds of currents of work, in which your own little private current is for the time entirely absorbed, and which you love enough to care for every thing in it as much as they care for it themselves.

It is some time since I have stayed here; and my last visits were too absorbed with my own little bit of old romance (first, those three days with Harry Leigh, and then a week without him) to be fully plunged into any other current.

So that the life and the inmates here stand out before me more vividly and objectively than usual. I have been long enough absent, in body or in spirit, for the old familiarity to have worn off, so as to allow me to see all with a new distinctness.

The whole family life seems to detach and group itself to me, with a fresh meaning and interest, and to connect itself with the past; as if a strong concentrated light isolated the dear picture for me, and made me possess it and them, past and present, more clearly than ever before.

Can it be twenty years since Maurice led Grace across the threshold, not "in white silk and Brussels point," as Rosalie threatened, but in mourning for her father, dear, gentle, old Mr. Leigh?

The "stream of time" in this house is all illuminated by life and love.

The years have not yet begun to be chronicled just by a new rind of bark, perceptible only on dissection, still less by the hollowing of the stem and the shrinking of *the branches*.

It is all still a record of growth, in this dear normal natural household.

The twenty years are illuminated in the faces of the children, from Mother Margaret, womanly, busy, and tender, to little undethroned Baby May, whom we still persist in calling baby at her mature age of seven.

It is quite twenty years. "Mother Margaret" is nineteen, as she told me with some dignity to-day, when I seemed astonished at some peculiarly mature and maternal admonition of hers to the "children," that is, the twins and baby.

"Aunt Win," she daringly declared, "I am very nearly as much older than baby as you are older than I am."

"But then, Maggie," I said in self-defence, "the *generation* makes all the difference. Dorothy and Dora, and even baby, will gradually advance to a level with you. But nothing will ever make you advance to the same level with me. There is a chasm between us, never to be bridged over in the table of relative dates. 'Younger, submit yourselves to the elder' is applicable to the youngest uncle and aunt, as it never can be to the most venerable sister."

At which that audacious young person merely retorted by a satirical nineteenth-century smile, and a kiss, more vehement and sisterly than in any sense became the serious relation of an aunt and niece.

In fact, Maurice never did altogether secure to me my due place with his children. He was too much interested in carrying on my own education to merge it in that of his own family; and so I have grown up rather side by side with them, than on my own due elevation.

But I cannot say I dislike it, and at all events it is a misfortune which it is now too late to mend.

It has given me the entrée to all their family institutions, the *Causeries du Lundi* with Maurice, the evening

half-hours with the mother, and even the Long Parliament. And the result is that they always express whatever is in their thoughts with entire freedom to me, more freely in some respects than even to Maurice and Grace, or to each other, not being afraid of paining me as they might their parents by daring speculation, or "honest doubts," and yet regarding me as protected by my "generation;" and perhaps, moreover, not being altogether free from the delight of startling maiden aunts, which seems hereditary in young persons of all historical periods.

Dear normal, natural English household! Sometimes I think things must happen here in a normal natural old English way; that the boys will fall in love, and the girls be fallen in love with and married, as in Shakespeare's time, and the "woman question," and all kinds of perplexed questions, keep far off in the political background, and the comedies be like *Beatrice and Benedict* and the tragedies like *Romeo and Juliet*, with a happy little turn the right way at the end.

Twenty years ago, Aunt O'Brien and I left Maurice and Grace together inside the old house, and drove back to Holmwood through the snow and the bitter wind. And I began to learn how to cease to be first with those we love best can be sweet, when we see how the change makes them more and better, so that the bit we get can become more and better to us than the old whole. That is, if we love them enough.

And that, with Maurice and Grace, it was impossible not to do. And then the dear new world of the children, unlike father and mother, or any of us, and yet with delightful fragments of us all cropping up in unexpected ways and places!

Margaret is five years older than I was then, and ten years wiser, as indeed all the young persons of this generation are apt to seem to me to be.

The adventure and scrambling, the picnic fashion in which we, at least Grace and I, received our education has passed away.

Margaret and Monica are both "certificated" young women. They have passed good "Cambridge examinations." What they have learned they have learned as methodically, and what they know they know as thoroughly, as their brothers do.

The British Museum, which dawned on me suddenly with all its vistas into the "five worlds" on my fourteenth birthday, has been familiar to them as long as they can remember. The "Iliad" and "Odyssey," and the grand old Greek literature into which their mother entered by a path as mysterious and deliciously marvellous as the steps into Aladdin's garden, were to these girls recognised orthodox school-books, as to their brothers.

Into the art of painting, which Grace wrung from Miss Lavinia's pale ensamples in water-colour and her own passionate study of nature, Margaret and Maurice have been initiated through schools of design and Art classes at the South Kensington Museum. Where we cleared our way like first explorers, they have been conducted by the best guides along the best-constructed roads.

Of course we lost our way very often, and lost our time, and they have travelled much farther at the same relative age into the country of what is to be known. But the sense of adventure, of daring, of discovery, which made each of our intellectual discoveries as exhilarating to us as the first discovery of America to Columbus, and our intellectual achievements as the conquest of some Eldorado by a handful of adventurers, these well-escorted young women can scarcely have.

And the results are scarcely perhaps so very much greater, as one might have hoped.

Margaret is a dear motherly elder sister, who can construe *Æschylus* if she likes, and could, I have no doubt,

explain the polarisation of light if she tried, but who remains a dear contented child, quite happy to leave the perplexities of the world alone, if she may be let alone to pursue her ceaseless little household kindnesses.

The sweet calm blue eyes, the practical docile mind have gone through all their lessons in languages and natural science, and rest, now, on the best methods of helping her mother through the household duties which occasionally begin to weigh heavily on her.

And Monica, with her questioning deep eyes, which often remind me of my indignation with Maurice for not being able to tell me the colour of her mother's, and his getting out of it by accusing Homer of vagueness in defining the colour of the *Ægean Sea*—Monica, with her questioning wistful eyes, questions and puzzles over the world, past, present, and to come, as eagerly as if she had climbed into the fold of knowledge by the most irregular paths, and had never been systematically taught the last system of logic. Her range of facts being tenfold as wide as ours was, her range of difficulties has proportionately widened, and she has found logic, like so many of us, the art of stating insoluble problems in an unanswerable way.

What treason am I talking?

What did we hope from the more thorough and higher education of women?

That it would make women greater enthusiasts for knowledge than centuries of education have made the majority of men?

That it would make women nearer the solution of the philosophical problems, which encountered the first Greek thinkers, than two thousand years of oscillating theories have made men?

That it would make women able to solve the moral and religious problems which the first Hebrew seers saw, and the last theological thinkers see also?

That it would make genius more common, or individuality greater, for being relieved of the superincumbent obstacles through which it had to make its way ?

That it would make women more women than they have been in all the nobleness and truth of womanhood, or less women than they have been in all the frivolity and exaggeration of womanishness ?

That it would do for women what it has never done for any man, plant any one of us on a platform where we shall find our battles have been fought for us, or have been made easier for us, by other people's fighting or thinking, except as far as our own fighting or thinking makes it ours ?

If we hoped anything like this, of course we have been disappointed.

But Maurice and Grace no doubt did not entertain any such foolish dreams, whatever I may have done. They only felt that the range of knowledge being enlarged as it is, not to open it generously and carefully to women is not merely to leave them where the last generation of women were, but to imprison them in rooms with half-closed shutters, and compel them to do the work the rest of the world are doing in daylight, in the dark.

Probably the moon and the stars which God hath ordained are no more wonderful and glorious to us than they were to David, although David thought they were stationary lights in the vaulted Temple, and we know that the sun is a seething world of incandescent vapour, and the moon a ruin of extinct volcanoes, and Mars a world mapped out into continents and seas, and the stars myriads of worlds, among which a world like our earth would be a spot far too insignificant to be observed ; and the whole, no still depths of changeless splendour, but a ceaselessly changing universe of interacting, destructive, and reconstructive forces.

But if David had lived now, and had been a king and

a poet, and had not known more than he did of the moon and the stars, he would have been living in a darkened room, or with closed eyes, and could not have written the Psalms, or have been David at all.

Maurice and Grace feel also that Englishwomen of our class in the present day have not only a world of ever-widening knowledge around them, but that they have possibly a very real struggle for daily bread before them, if they happen to become the extra six Englishwomen in each hundred, or even if they have only to assist in the very real struggle for daily bread of the corresponding hundred of masculine human beings. They wish, in short, that each of their girls shall be able to live independently, if they do not marry, and be able to marry a poor man, and bravely share his struggles, if love points that way. And therefore they have carefully provided their daughters as well as their sons with the means of self-maintenance, by being able to do one thing well enough to live by it, if necessary.

Margaret spent long enough at a training-school to be able to take the management of a national school. And Monica paints well enough for her pictures to sell, and could, moreover, undertake more than one branch of the education of girls herself.

In these twenty years the costume has changed among the "Fans" and "Dans" as well as among us, and the stating of the problems has changed; but the human material and the problems themselves remain very little changed.

Therefore I think Christianity is as much needed in the world now as when the glad tidings were first brought to the shepherds watching their flocks, and to the wise men watching the stars; and I do not wonder that it is as much combated as when the Jews said, "He is beside himself," and the Athenians, "What will this babbler say?"

CHAPTER VII.

WINIFRED'S MOAN-BOOK (*continued*).—CAUSERIE DU LUNDI

IT was my birthday to-day.
Am I as ready to say which birthday as twenty years ago?

Ah! How these anniversaries lead us back!

I woke that morning in the picturesque, cosy old suburban country-house, dating back to Queen Anne's days, where we live now.

It is all so vivid to me, now!

That day when a day seemed an age as to the possibilities of enjoyment in it, and a moment as to its rapidity in vanishing; when Rosalie woke me by bringing in "The Light of the World" at six, and then conjured me to sleep till seven. "Tranquillise thyself, little enthusiast," she said; "the day will last long enough!" As if I could sleep with that inquiring, wistful, sacred Face, watching at the closed weed-grown door before me, and with the little Bible with those words in my mother's writing in it, under my pillow, and shining on me again in illuminated letters from the picture-frame, "*We love Him because He first loved us,*" and all the love and the presents awaiting me down-stairs, and Maurice coming for the day, and the dear promise of being introduced to Grace!

Has any thing of all the world of promise before me on that October morning disappointed me?

Of the deepest things, not one !

The Divine Love as fresh this morning as then, and dearer, yes, thank God ! dearer, because more needed and proved.

Maurice and Grace? A thousand times no. More to me than then, themselves, because more *in themselves*, and more by the dear multiplication of seven in their children.

My life has not indeed been ideal, natural, simply developed like theirs.

But it has not been a "Contracting Chamber."

That other strongest human love has not certainly run smooth through it, as with them.

I cannot blind myself to that.

For it was no dream; the long-growing interest in Harry Leigh, the exhilarating conviction of what he might be, interwoven with anxiety about what he was; the three days in this house, in which we seemed altogether to understand each other; the yielding to my father's opposition; the long years of my father's declining health, when nothing seemed to make Harry understand, or to make me sure that I was right; the two years since my father's death, when no one has heard anything of Harry—that does not make an ideal woman's life. But it represents, I suppose, what in one form or another is the material of many an English-woman's life from twenty to thirty, in these days; uncertainty, suspense, living from day to day, not quite able, decidedly and conclusively, to take up any plan of life, because of dim probabilities which must be more sacred than any other plan—if they are realised.

This is a perplexing society, or period, or world, or human nature.

Sometimes I almost think, if the fathers and mothers decisively arranged the marriages it would be better. Only I *don't* think so Just to marry to make some one

happy or comfortable, is not that motive enough? But then I don't think I could have made any one in the abstract happy, or even comfortable, not being happy myself.

Sometimes I think if it was arranged by lot, as tradition says was the case among the Moravians, it would work more satisfactorily. Only for me it would unfortunately have been entirely unsatisfactory and impossible, if the lot had fallen on any but one number. The difficulty would always be to be quite sure the "lot" was "vocation."

The difficulty to me, of course, is Harry.

I think, I *think* I could be happy, I mean content, with any conclusion, if I were quite sure it was the best for him. God would make it best, if not pleasantest, for me.

Yet even this I cannot really think, or try to think, until I know.

Resignation to an unknown necessity, acquiescence in an unknown decision, is impossible.

And so the years, the birthdays have come and gone. But in one thing at least, perhaps, this my great perplexity has helped me; my old dread of "getting into the middle of my world" has been warded off.

I have had no world of my own to get into the middle of, and, therefore, naturally, necessarily, inevitably, have had to live in other people's worlds, which, I trust, has not been without its advantages.

* * * * *

I went this morning down into the dear old summer-parlour, the parlour with the great wooden bay-window projecting over the river. I wonder why wooden bow-windows always give me so much pleasure, more than the most elaborate architectural stone oriels and bays?

I think it is partly because they suggest a combina

tion of two things I sympathize with strongly—love of home, and lack of means.

They grow out of some human creature's love of air and light, pressing some dear home forth into the sunshine and the pleasant, roomy places of the world. They grow from within, for the inside, not for the outside; and therefore they are pleasant to see from outside.

And, also, they make one think of a ship;—always a pleasant thought to me, strange as it might seem to some people that it should be so, in reference to a home.

Because all our homes are really only ships, pressing forward through a changing sea. *We* are sailing forward in that many-sided, ship-like room; onward, forward with all the precious human freight, whither we know little; but to Whom we know well.

No garlands or elaborate gifts to-day as on that old birthday! Only Maurice and Grace, together, and that dear garland of their seven, and welcomes from each and all.

They have trees, and garlands, and family celebrations, and sometimes, I believe, anniversary verses, and all kinds of traces of our ancient Teutonic origin among themselves. But just that, for myself, I cannot exactly bear. This does not mean that the world is not dear and sweet to me. But only that I should not quite choose to sit crowned publicly in the middle of it, even for an instant. It is not rounded enough for that.

Only Baby May transgressed, and brought me a present, knocking, blushing and apologizing, at my bedroom door, before breakfast, with a hyacinth in her hand.

“They all love you, Aunt Win, as much as me” (May has not grown beyond that ungrammatical, or super-grammatical *me*, which unites in the dual *complication of a self-contemplating self the negro and the*

metaphysician), "only they think you would not care for anything. But I think you must. And I have only two things quite my own which you would care for, Dot and this. Dot is a dog, and loves me. I have no right to give away Dot, have I? He might not like it. But this I may give. It is living too, but it would live better, Margaret says, with you. And it is only me that loves it, not it that loves me; so I have a right, haven't I? Not that I mean," she continued, colouring crimson, I suppose because she saw me hesitate, "that Dot might not come to love you better than me, Aunt Win. But I don't think he ought to have to try, do you?"

Thus May threw the perplexities of her affections into the form of anxiety for the moral welfare of her beloved, like so many of us!

A whole world of possible sacrifice, I knew, was involved to May in even contemplating the possibility of such a transference of Dot's affections.

The other children are in pairs, Margaret and Austin, Monica and Eustace. Walter belongs to every one, and the twins naturally belong to each other. But May being four years younger than any of the rest, is unmated, or was so until the happy day that brought the foundling home.

May had always had a peculiar tenderness for unbidden dogs. She had been known, when four years old, to insert an especial petition in her evening prayer at her mother's knee. "Please God take care of the poor little dogs that have no masters." And when, soon after this, an unattractive, cowed-looking little mongrel terrier followed her one day in a walk, from time to time looking confidentially back, pretending to belong to her, May seemed to feel this so clear a vocation to its adoption, that no one in the house had the heart to refuse her, and thenceforth May and Dot became an inseparable pair.

The delicacy of the compliment, therefore, involved in the concession that Dot might possibly come to love me best, touched me profoundly. She could not bear me to think (that was what the darling meant) that I might not be dearest to any one. A whole depth of womanly character and destiny, and of possible sympathies between us, seemed unsealed to me in the precious little one. The soft little fingers clasped tenderly in mine went deep, deep into my heart, unfolding some capacity of love and pain scarcely ever revealed even to myself.

It is always the little unintended touches that open these hidden springs.

Intentional sympathy rivets them tight and close.

I would have clasped her close to my heart. But I dared not disquiet the child's heart with a passionate emotion she could not have understood. So I merely pressed one long kiss on the soft cheek, and gave one long look into the clear, wistful, blue eyes, which wondered at the tears in mine, and taking the hyacinth in one hand while I led May, or rather she led me, by the other, we gravely descended the stairs together.

But a link has come between me and the little one which I have scarcely felt with any one before. Perhaps it is partly her growing up, as I did, like an only child, that draws us so together.

The family gift to me to-day was that I was to have the Monday afternoon, the *Causerie du Lundi*, with Maurice.

None of the children could have had more of a child's delight in it than I. Indeed I sometimes feel as if I were more of a child than any of them, in some ways. Having been the one child of the house so long, with every one responsible for me, and myself having no responsibility for any one, kept me long a child. And then my education being so incomplete and irregular,

not being intelligently acquainted with the British Museum until I was fourteen, and never having to "pass" anything! So that I was always an "untested" creature, not quite certain how much I knew or didn't know, nor how much I could do or couldn't do; with Uncle O'Brien persuaded that girls ought not to know much, and couldn't if they ought; and Aunt O'Brien vibrating between a sense of the Christian duty of doing all we can for other people, and a sense of the lady-like necessity of letting other people do all they can for us. All which tended to keep me long a child.

And then came my father from India, with my two younger sisters; and they, having managed my father and his house for a year, and taken care of him on his way home by the overland route, and seen so much of the world, were naturally far more advanced than I. They were both very kind to me, and gave me a great deal of their experience and advice. But for them I had nothing they seemed to need in return. And as for an elder sister's responsibilities on their behalf, I might as naturally have felt responsibility for the House of Convocation. And then they both married very early, which necessarily removed them still further from my sphere, and gave them still more experience, so that until they left again for India with their husbands, I was, perhaps, a little overwhelmed, between my uncle and aunt and my younger sisters.

When they went away, my father was left to my sole care, fortified, of course, by the admonitions and warnings of his married daughters.

We were great friends, my father and I. Indeed I think we both felt rather emancipated from that weight of experience and wisdom which had been so happily transferred to wider spheres. He used to say it was as good as being "boys" again together.

He had a shooting-lodge in the Highlands; and we

fished, and rode, and boated, and made extempore excursions with the smallest conceivable quantity of luggage, promising each other never to tell any one.

And in the evenings we read together, Sir Walter Scott, Pope, Shakespeare; sometimes Byron. Below that era we did not descend. He considered Wordsworth the fashion of a clique, and anything below Wordsworth mere alluvial deposit, not consolidated into literature at all.

Occasionally, also, he would revive his classics, and give me lessons in Virgil and Horace, reciting, and liking me to recite, being always very severe as to quantities, and as to any feminine attempts of mine to spring to instinctive apprehensions of the meaning.

Harry Leigh was often with us; at first my father liked him to sketch among the hills, although he compared his patient, elaborate work unfavourably with certain bold and dashing "effects" popular in his youth.

And with Harry I had naturally a whole modern world of literature in common, which my father regarded as the mere "talk" of the young people of the day, crumbings and washings of the ancient rocks, which might perhaps make *soil*, but never *rocks*, unless indeed it might be some shapeless lumps of conglomerate to sustain flowers and grasses for foregrounds.

Virgil, Shakespeare, Pope, and Sir Walter were *reading*. Mere moderns were just drawing-room chat. Yet, though it seemed almost a treason to my father to feel it, and although I tried loyally to balance my respect for the old with my love for the new, in this world of modern thought Harry and I lived, and moved, and breathed, and fed, and were at home, whilst in the other we rather gazed about as strangers and travellers.

I did what I could to keep the two from discussions. But the combat would sometimes take the exasperated

character of a combat between two creatures who cannot live in each other's elements, a drake and a terrier, for instance, whose fury increases the more neither can reach the other; Harry knowing as little of Pope as my father did of Tennyson. So that between Harry's loyalty to his prophets, and my father's sense of duty to the deluded rising generation, the gulf tended to widen, and no doubt thus deepened the one conviction which my father and I could never share, and which has made all the difference to me.

It was not that my father meant to be intolerant. Who ever did? He belonged to a liberal school, and believed himself ready to make every allowance for all "rational divergences of opinion." To prefer Tennyson to Sir Walter Scott, those "sentimental dreams about a quantity of indefinite young women" (he alluded to the earlier poems), "to the spirit-stirring music and the vivid definite pictures of the 'Lady of the Lake,' was certainly, he must say, *not* a rational divergence of opinion, any more than to prefer Mendelssohn's meanderings to Handel's melodies, or Turner's insanities to Claude. But for intellectual delusions he would make every allowance. Besides, sensible young people grew out of them. What he dreaded was the moral weakness involved in such a subservience to a puerile fashion."

And so when Harry turned from Medicine to Painting, as a profession, his heresies about Turner, Mendelssohn, and Tennyson were thrown into the balance, and my father came to that immovable decision which, sealed by his declining health, I could not, *could not*, resist.

And now these young people of the new generation are going back to Handel and Bach, and on, no one knows whither, beyond the "In Memoriam" and the Idylls into new paganisms altogether beyond my reach or comprehension.

All which has tended and tends to keep me always something of a child. The people around me have always been so much wiser than I.

What a long way I have wandered from the Monday with Maurice! I was led into it by thinking of the child's delight with which Maurice and I started for our "day out" together, as on that birthday twenty years ago. Not, indeed, as then, for the British Museum, or with any prospect of such luxuries as "ices." For the country, the real country accessible to cockneys, for the heaths near Chiselhurst, with a basket containing two small pies or pasties, made expressly by Mother Margaret, and a tin for leaves and flowers, and many admonitions from the young people to take care of ourselves, not lose our way, and come back in reasonable time.

Maurice was at heart quite as buoyant and ready to enjoy the day as I.

The weight of responsibility in his life had kept his heart as fresh for the reaction of rest, as the absence of responsibility in mine had left me free to enter into other people's interests.

"Brother and sister again!" he said, as we left the station with our basket, with the delicious sense of not being bound to see or do anything, or to give an account of ourselves to any one.

"To him who knoweth not for what port he is bound no wind can prove favourable," was a maxim to be entirely set at nought on this abnormal day.

It was one of those October days, when nature seems to have distilled spring and summer into an effervescing tonic, bracing every muscle to exertion, and stimulating every nerve for enjoyment.

I am sorry to be led into anti-temperance imagery; but the whole world, every creature in it, and every sense in us, seemed invited to a feast of fruits and sparkling wines.

The woods had been touched by a frost which made them glow like the woods in any of the American stories. The furze-blossom on the commons seemed to us a field of the cloth of gold. In the hollows here and there curled silvery mists.

There was a splendour, a royalty, a glow of gorgeousness about everything which sent one to "kings' chambers" with their purple and scarlet, and gold and silver tissues, for words to express it, and then brought one out again ashamed of the meanness of the comparison, feeling that the palaces indeed hold but the tinsel which lasts for generations, yet belongs only to the moment, and this natural world, the true gold which lasts but a few days, yet belongs to the eternal.

We had been brought out into one of God's "wealthy places." We talked of many things as we roamed through these our wide palace chambers, so much wider and wealthier to us for not being ours.

We talked of the *Theologia Germanica*, and the glorious liberty of not being bound down to the poor "mine" and "me."

We talked of the early monastic orders, how each had begun in an aspiration and a liberation, leading to higher obedience, and how each had to be reformed again and again; and of Luther, and Port Royal, and St. Vincent de Paul, and Milton, and Baxter, and Wesley, and Wilberforce; and how every good work was done for ever, and yet none was final; how the victories were never lost, and yet the battle always had to be begun again.

And then we spoke of the confusions of the battlefield, how in every age so much of the strength for right was apparently lost by the good being never in one phalanx; which led us on to the battle within the battle, the great individual moral struggle of every soul.

And then we went back to our own "few sheep" in

the wilderness and in the fold, to the parish and the family, and the personal life.

We sat on a slope covered with withered fern, golden-brown in the sunshine, and looked out on ranges of distance softening into tender grey to meet the pale gold of the sky. A cottage child was nutting among the hazels of a hedge near us, while the cow she was herding was audibly crunching the sweet grass close to us, the only sound that broke the silence, as if to emphasize it.

Maurice was arranging some mosses and leaves in the tin for Monica.

"Ah, brother," I said, "yours has not been a 'Contracting Chamber,' but you have left yourself little time for looking through the windows of your palace chamber into your 'three worlds' of literature, and art, and science. You have had too much to do with the window into the world of human life, which you told me in your old parable is also a door and a gate of mercy."

"And yet," he said, with a slight despondency in his tone, "sometimes it seems as if I had done scarcely anything there."

"At least," I said, "you have thrown yourself into it heart and soul. And results, you used to tell me, are only to be counted in the 'Fifth World,' of which we have not the keys. Besides, are there not two kinds of gift and of charitable work in the world—benevolence and sympathy? The works of benevolence, it seems to me, can be counted, and measured, and reported. But the work of sympathy, who can see or measure that? And yet without the sympathy, which can no more be weighed and measured than sunlight, the works of benevolence are apt to stiffen into mere machinery, which may indeed 'warm and fill' the animal part, the molluscous part, the vegetable part of us, but leaves everything in us that has reached even the development of a dog, stunted and starved."

“Ah,” he replied, “that world of human life is so infinitely diversified! How could one go into it with one’s own little cruse of sympathy and comprehension, unless one had a Divine sympathy and comprehension to lead people to, as infinite as the diversities? Think of the range of intelligence and social difference included not merely in the detestable word ‘*masses*,’ but in what is supposed to be a classification—‘*working men*.’ The social and intellectual distinction between many mechanics and agricultural or unskilled labourers is wider, incomparably, than the distinction between any member of the upper middle class and a prince, or between any educated man and the first of our men of science.

“And in London and places adjoining, a few acres of ground may be divided between populations as different as those of a fishing village and a manufacturing town. In my own congregation have I not seafaring men who have lived lives of daring adventure, like those of the men who vanquished the Spanish Armada, ‘men of the world,’ keen and sarcastic? day-labourers whose round of toil has been as unvaried as a beaver’s, and almost as instinctive as an ant’s, with minds scarcely awake on any side but that by which daily bread is earned? a few first-class mechanics with intellects imperfectly fed with facts, indeed, but trained in the permanent debating societies of their workshops to the acutest perception of the difficulties of belief, and the inconsistencies of believers; on the one hand, men awake to every fallacy, on the other, men whose intellectual slumber scarcely any fallacy would startle?”

“‘Besides women and children,’ you would add,” I interposed, “if you thought it courteous.”

“Besides women and children,” he resumed, “as different in character, at all events, as the men.”

“But you know it,” I said, “you know them.”

"I do know them," he replied, "many of them. And just that would make the difficulty of preaching to them insuperable, if I were not sure that absolutely to every heart among them the Master says this day, as in 'that great day of the feast' of old, '*If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;*' if He were not this very day, as then, an inexhaustible well-spring of strength and joy for every heart that finds Him."

"But as it is," I said, "you find preaching the work in which your whole heart delights, and into which your whole mind and soul go forth, as Handel might into his music, or Michael Angelo into his sculpture."

"More!" he said, after a pause, in a low voice of deep content. "Yes, more. For the music does come back to me from human hearts; and the sculpture lives."

"For those who follow Him," I said, "there are indeed no *carrières manquées*; not even mine" (I could not help adding), "which seems only holding tools for the sculptors, and helping to write out the notes for the choir."

"Least of all thine, little sister!" he said. "Least of all work as imponderable as dew and sunshine, like thine. Besides," he added, "have you not gone through a year's training at the hospital in nursing? And who knows what uses there may be for that?"

Ah! I knew what he meant, and he knew I knew, too well for me to venture to answer.

The sun was getting low, and the home tribunal could not be entirely set at nought.

On our brisk walk back to the station over heath and hilly roads, the *causerie* took a turn to the children.

We remarked how different their perplexities were to what ours had been. With us the heresies dreaded by our elders had been a little mild pruning of Biblical criticism. With them the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and they were boldly summoned on many sides to

take their choice between the credibility of the Vatican decrees and the incredibility of being themselves anything more individually enduring than a fragment of sponge.

“It is a strange thing,” he said, “to watch these young creatures, bone of one’s bone, launch away as detached on the trackless sea as if each voyage was a voyage of discovery, and the first ever made, which indeed to each of them, as of us, it is. It is very strange, too, to see the men who were the advanced guard of our youth regarded by this new generation as sober, conscientious, almost retrograde elders, only fit for a reserve,—a Landwehr, or even a Landsturm; fit only to defend old fortresses, but totally incapable of new conquests.”

“Nevertheless they are *not* detached,” I said; “we are a fleet, and every ship in the fleet is magnetic.”

“And perhaps,” he added, “the magnetism of the old ships will be strongest when they have got into port.”

So we reached the station, and our moderation as to hours being approved by the Vehmgericht, I received an invitation to the Long Parliament, whilst Grace was with the little ones, and Maurice was at the Reading-room, where he generally went every evening to talk over the news of the day, public or private, of the nation, or of the families of those there; the news of the day and the New Testament being to Maurice parts of a continuous history.

A cheery fire was lit as an especial festival for me, on the chilly October evening.

Margaret sate on a stool near it, knitting as mechanically as any of her Teutonic foremothers; Monica sate on the floor, clasping her knees, and gazing into the fire, which she always considers favourable to meditation, leading one to endless speculations as to the origin of coals, and the issues of combustion; Walter kept migrat-

ing from his chair to the fire, which he used as an instrument for roasting chestnuts; thus in combination with Monica illustrating Schiller's dictum that to some, "nature is a heavenly goddess, and to others a milch-cow providing them with butter;" Austin leant forward with his elbows on his knees, on which he had laid a sketch of Monica's, and with his hands clasping his forehead; Eustace leant back, in a parliamentary attitude, in a dilapidated easy-chair with one arm.

The debates of the Long Parliament, that evening, were, as usual, not free from digression.

Eustace declared there were only two political difficulties in England worth considering; too many women, and too little land.

Walter thought that, in the first place, as to the first difficulty, every one should marry as soon as they could.

But the extra six women remained. What was to be done with these?

Various remedies, it was observed, had been suggested, from convents to infanticide, which was considered for the moment to close the debate in that direction.

Then there was the land. Too little land meant too many paupers.

Remedies suggested: emigration, cultivation of Dartmoor, a prohibition that any one should have more than one country-house, building societies, government becoming the sole proprietor, multiplication (by what mode not indicated) of peasant proprietors.

"At all events it is clear that some of us ought to emigrate, to get out of the way," said Eustace. "And I am ready."

Walter declared he was not in any one's way, being bent on abandoning the land for the sea, the Englishman's native element.

Eustace pronounced himself ready to be sacrificed on the altar of necessity.

It was asked, what would he do ?

"Construe Virgil to the Hottentots," remarked Austin.

"You all know Eustace made or mended the very chair you are sitting on," remonstrated Mother Margaret indignantly.

"Yes, we all know to our peril," said Walter, rocking audibly and ostentatiously on his chair to exhibit the contraction of its fourth leg. "However, it is certainly capital training for me !"

"You would only add to the first difficulty whilst trying to remedy the second, which is what almost always happens, in politics, and everything, I think," said Monica gravely. "By emigrating, you would leave seven women."

"Of course one of the sisters must go also," Eustace replied. "Who would do best? You can all darn and stitch, I suppose?"

"Who can be best *spared*, I think, is the question," suggested Monica. "Certainly not Margaret."

A shiver of dismay, complimentary to Margaret, ran through the assembly at the possibility.

"People who can be spared are no good anywhere."

"Ah, there it is again," lamented Monica, "the perplexity which makes the whole emigration question, it seems to me, so very difficult."

Austin interposed to the rescue of Monica from her own self-depreciation.

"It depends on what they can be spared *from*," he said. "Good pictures can as little be spared in England as good bread, and soon they will be in demand, no doubt, at Denver, and on the Kaffre frontier."

"Nevertheless, it is useful now to be able to bake bread and starch fine things; and I mean to do it," said

Monica, "if I can only do it second best. Mother says, to do our best when we know it can be only second best is noble."

(So long ago, had she not said it to me?)

"But," said Margaret, "I believe we are all wrong. I don't believe there *is* too little land, or that there *are* any extra women. I think it is one of what father would call the 'practical heresies' to say so."

"No extra women!" said Eustace. "You might as well say there are no lost tribes."

"I don't believe there ever were any lost tribes," said Austin. "I mean, in the Bible. Bits of all of them came back. The tribes were scattered all over the world long before the Gospels."

"Not one extra woman!" said Margaret, flushing with an indignation unusual to her. "I should think not! I think it is blasphemy to say there ever was."

"Mother Margaret's language is becoming scarcely parliamentary," said Eustace. "We are not drawing up a Confession of Faith. Anathemas are not in order."

"You know quite well what I mean," she pursued. "To say unmarried women are extra women is, I think, simply wicked. We may none of us marry!" she proceeded, generously, I felt, throwing her ægis over me, "and what will you call us then?"

"Just an extra woman," I interposed, stroking the dear flushed cheek, "like me; an extra that gets admitted into extra places like this."

"An extra that makes the chief part in all the accounts," said Walter gallantly, "as in father's old story."

"An extra that makes all the difference between a home and four walls," said Austin softly.

"An extra that is outside some things, just to enable her to be in the inmost inside of all our hearts," said one and another.

"Thanked! like the Great Duke, at the bar of the House!" I tried to say, laughing, and nearly ended by crying.

And so that debate ended.

I could not finish the birthday without one of the children's "Half-hours with the Best Authors."

Monica resigned me her turn.

And by little Baby May's crib by her mother's bedside, the last relic of the nursery, Grace and I crowned the day.

Not that we said much.

We sate on the bed, beside each other, holding each other's hands.

"Twenty years since we began to love each other!" I said.

She would not have said it to me. The chronology of the twenty years had been so differently illustrated in her life and in mine.

"To love each other all but best!" She whispered.

And that was all we said.

She drew me to her heart, as she would Margaret or Monica. Then afterwards we knelt beside each other and prayed, quite silently, and the tears which would fall were not only mine.

But when we rose and kissed each other, there was light through all the clouds and on all the tears.

And so the birthday ended.

No; that was not quite the end. For, when I reached my own room, Fan was moving about with aims evidently independent of the little "tidyings" she was elaborating.

And a few words of sympathy brought out the last experiences of her quiet love-story. Her long engagement was coming at last to a satisfactory end. The losses of the shipwreck which had delayed the plenishing

of their home were sufficiently made up for her "young man" to decline to wait any longer. He was mate on board a good vessel. In two months he hoped to be at home.

"You have been true to each other a long time, Fan," I said.

"Ten years, Miss Winifred, he has never failed to write from every port. He says it is nothing to wonder at. But I know it is. Ten years have made him more of a man, and better to look at. But it is another thing with me, though he will have it it isn't."

"You will make a good home for any man, Fan," I said.

"So he says," she said. "He says he knew that, ever since he saw me come down to the lodging to nurse poor brother Dan, who would have died at sea but for Dick. But it would be no hard matter for any woman to make a good home for him. He's as neat-handed as Miss Margaret, Miss Winifred, and as tender to Dan he was as a mother, and as light-hearted as Master Walter."

Fan was launched on an extensive subject; and pleasant it was to go back in vision from this happy climax to the day when the same moist Irish grey eyes, so large then in the famished little face, gazed through the gate of the rock-garden, and the same voice, quivering with eagerness, appealed, "Lady, give us a flower."

That interview has ended the birthday with a good glow of happiness, for dear old Fan's sake; and (how are we to get out of the superstitions of our native Paganism?) with an augury of hope for that other life which surely was no less truly bound to mine!

CHAPTER VIII.

A FEW days after the birthday recorded in Winifred's note-book, the Long Parliament met again.

But the subject before the House was not one of general politics.

The brothers and sisters sate close together on the rug before the grate, and they spoke in low and very grave tones.

There was no fire, and the kettle stood, black, on one hob of the old Queen Anne's grate, and a heap of chestnuts on the other; and to all appearance there was not much fire in the great hearth of the planetary system outside. The river was creeping, grey and cold, under a low vault of grey shapeless clouds.

But the little fraternal conclave was altogether too absorbed in the matter before it to have any attention to spare for the planetary system, the state of the nation, or of their own cheerless hearth.

"Uncle Harry married, in the West Indies, Margaret!" exclaimed Walter, "when we had so often gone over how it was all to be here in our own church!"

"And settled the bridesmaids and everything! Baby May to be chief."

"Taken in by a wretched woman with two children," commented Eustace; "widow of some vulgar doctor who had the practice before."

"Whom no doubt she had poisoned," suggested Walter.

"Unless he poisoned himself," amended Austin grimly ; "those fellows in the colonies haven't half of them passed."

"And two abominable half-caste picaninnies to be mother's nieces !"

"Hardly half-caste, and only one !" said Winifred, in the interests of justice ; "the first husband was Scotch."

"And so is she, no doubt !" said Eustace, whose politics ought to have raised him above such unc cosmopolitan prejudices, "a canny Glasgow body, twice his age."

"She is scarcely twenty, and partly French," said Margaret.

"A fierce Ultramontane, no doubt !" said Eustace, gloomily. "Well, the girls can be disposed of in convents."

"Perhaps she is a communist," rejoined Walter. "At any rate on the wrong side of Waterloo and Trafalgar !"

"You forget Acadia, and the French Canadians, and the noble Jesuit missionaries among the Hurons. She might be an Evangeline," interposed Austin.

"At any rate, she may easily be good enough for Uncle Harry !" said Walter.

A sentiment which seemed to meet with no opposition, except a weak whispered protest from Margaret. "I suppose it was a misunderstanding," she pleaded. "He always thought her too good for him, mother says. And perhaps he thought it hopeless."

"Such misunderstandings ought to be impossible, Margaret, and would be to any one with a heart and brain worthy of Aunt Win. You know you never can bear to read a story plotted out of a misunderstanding. It takes two people to make a misunderstanding. When both are even commonly true and straightforward, it is

impossible ; and where one is noble and transparent as mountain-air, like Aunt Win, it is quite impossible. He might have known. He *ought* to have known."

"Known what, Monica?" said Austin, controversially, with the weight of his manhood and his extra two years of life. "You speak as if men and women were all brothers and sisters. It is not all such plain sailing in those matters. You none of you"—he corrected himself—"we none of us, know anything about it."

"We have read a few novels," said Eustace.

"And seen a few people so circumstanced," observed Walter.

"Fan, and her 'young man;' and Aunt Winifred's younger sisters!" retorted Austin. "Fan's was a good old-fashioned love-story. And I don't suppose there was much to understand or misunderstand in Aunt Lucy and Aunt Isabella. That seemed plain sailing enough."

"As if that was all of the world one had seen!" rejoined Walter.

"Children," Margaret intervened, in a very grave, maternal voice, "you are all getting out of your depth. It is a very terrible thing for us all. And I never was so sorry for anything in my life."

"Of course. Nor were any of us!" was the general rejoinder.

"But you don't think," said Walter, and he paused. "You don't think Aunt Win really——"

They all gathered closer, as Margaret went on in a husky voice.

"It is just this. They loved each other always."

"Not always, Mother Margaret; don't make Uncle Harry out one of the tutor lovers in the American children's stories! He was not such a prig as that."

"Tutor! I should think not," said Eustace. "Aunt Win was always worth a hundred of Uncle Harry."

"So he always felt," said Margaret, softening to the

accused. "I do think you are all a little hard on poor Uncle Harry."

"Poor Uncle Harry indeed!" growled Walter
"Poor——" Monica laid her hand on his lips.

"*Don't* say that, Walter," she said. "*Never* say that. Aunt Win shall never be called poor! She never could be."

"Whose fault is it then?" said the whole house, in various keys.

"Grandpapa's!" muttered Eustace. "It is always only somebody, as far back as one's grandfather, that one is allowed to be angry with. Now I don't find that any relief."

"Who wants you to find any relief?" said Monica. "Of course, one *can't* find any relief for wrong things. If one could, things wouldn't be half wrong."

"And half of them are only half wrong," said Margaret, feebly.

"Oh Mother Margaret, don't!" said the intolerant youthful fraternity generally. "Don't muddle up right and wrong. Don't crumble things down into no meaning. Uncle Harry is *all* wrong. Wouldn't any of us have been all wrong if we had done what he has? One must hate somebody, for such a wretched ending to things. Wouldn't one have hated oneself?"

"I dare say Uncle Harry does hate himself," said Austin, very seriously.

"I hope he does," hoarsely murmured the chorus; with which apostrophe to Nemesis the discussion was concluded.

CHAPTER IX.

NOT many weeks before this debate in the Long Parliament, the young widowed mother, on whose marriage these young persons had been so severe, sate watching by the sick-bed of her only child in one of the West Indian islands.

It was a sultry tropical night.

There was no stir in the air or on earth, except the restless stirring of the fever-stricken little one, and the heavy breathing of the old negro nurse, who lay, tired out, and fast asleep in the adjoining room.

The mother's face was worn, the soft dark eyes had dark rims, and the brow had two upright anxious furrows, with much sleepless watching; but the curves of the cheek were those of youth, almost of childhood, and every movement, weary and worn as she was, had a lightness and a supple grace.

She was dressed in a full light muslin wrapper of a delicate creamy colour, the white frill clasped the round long throat. She was one of the people who unconsciously fashion their own shells to the furthest coil; her graceful form and varying expressive face, and even her simple well-fitting dress, seemed to belong essentially to her, as much as her inmost soul.

Even that day she had cut off all the dead flowers on the climbing plants that twined round the pillars of the

verandah. She could not endure decay and disorder. Indeed, your favourable or unfavourable verdict on her would depend on how much it seemed to you it was the outside form that penetrated inward, or the inward life that radiated outward.

At that moment her lips were compressed and her brow furrowed with the bitterest anxiety, yet every movement was as quiet and easy as if she had been entertaining guests; and throughout the room and in her dress was not a trace of disorder or haste.

From time to time little uneasy moans broke from the little sufferer, a boy of three years old, and appealing hands were stretched out to her.

There was little hope in her face, young as it was.

She had not seen the bright side of life, or a happy issue to affliction; and as she sate there many bitter memories came flowing over her heart.

Her own mother, a French Canadian, had died young, and her father's own harsh character, with his second marriage, had made escape from his house into any kind of marriage seem to her a deliverance.

The young Scotch doctor whom she had married had not been unkind or indifferent to her. But he was the ne'er-do-weel of his family, and although his marriage steadied him in a measure, early intemperance was avenged in a rapid sinking before the first tropical fever that attacked him.

He left her with this one boy, then an infant.

With the small sum Harry Leigh had paid for the practice, and her own native French accent, and such small accomplishments in music and embroidery as she had learned, she had hoped to maintain her child and herself.

But this sickness had baffled her entirely, and to return to her father's house to be a double burden on the sharply-

managed household, would for any length of time have been intolerable.

But all these secondary anxieties had for this night of crisis been swallowed in the one intense craving that the child, which was all of her very own left her in the world, might live.

"If only Alick lives, it will be life, and God will make it life, and not death, to us both," she felt.

With anxious eagerness she looked from time to time at the watch which marked the slowly-passing hours ; wishing for the moment when she might relieve the feverish little one by the cooling medicine prescribed, with a pathetic faith in Harry Leigh's medical wisdom, which would have seriously surprised the Long Parliament, had they known it.

At last the desired minute came, the soothing draught was administered, the pillow turned, the feverish hands and forehead bathed and kissed. And the mother sate down once more to her watch, and to that long prayer of silence which amounted to little more than an alternate look from the child to God, and from God to the child.

Gradually the moans grew less uneasy, until they became more like contented cooings, the tossings ceased, one cheek sank on the pillow, the breathing came so evenly and softly that she rose more than once to be sure it came at all ; and the child lay for hours in deep tranquil sleep.

When Harry Leigh came in the morning the boy was still asleep.

"You have saved him, Mr. Leigh," said the mother. "It was that last draught ; that, and God's great pity."

Harry had the grace to disclaim the acknowledgment.

"It was very simple," he said. "But God has pity, no doubt ; and little children have a great reserve of life to fall back on. Nine in ten of our patients, you know, do recover," he added, trying to cheer her into a less

strained state of emotion, "else how could we live? It is natural on the whole, you see, that children should live."

"It seems to me so much more natural," she said, "for people to die."

There was a simple acquiescence in the sorrowfulness of life in her words and tones which touched him very much.

He had thought her buoyant, light-hearted, graceful, a child with her child, what many English people mean by "French." And she was evidently more. He remembered what some one had said about the *fond* of French character being not joyous, but melancholy.

She, then, also felt, as he had so bitterly learned to feel, that the natural thing in life was for things to go against our wishes and wills, and apparently against our good. And yet she had not lost trust in "God's great pity."

For the first time he noticed what a perfect nurse she was, how gentle her voice, and how accurate and firm and tender her touch, as she leant over the child.

He said he would call again in the evening.

And all day, from day to day for many days, that call in the evening seemed the event of the day; he did not care to ask himself how or why, until the child had quite recovered; and the calls in the evening and morning were no longer natural and necessary.

Then he began to miss these daily events, and by degrees to ask himself why.

He was, or chose to consider himself, a banished man. His career in England, of course, was over. Life, there, was at too high and constant a strain for a poor desultory fellow like himself, who had once missed a step on the ladder, ever to regain his footing.

And why should he wish to regain it? Why should he long to be on that competitive ant-heap again, where

the prizes were, after all, so prosaic, and, prosaic or not, were scarcely any longer within his reach ?

What was a house in Mayfair, even if decorated better than any in Pompeii, compared with the freedom and magnificence of the forest through which he was riding, with its luxuriance of glorious flowers, trumpets and bells and imperial chalices pealing out and pouring forth colour and fragrance in lavish floods ?

A great house for which you must keep hosts of servants ; servants for whom you must keep other servants ; carriages for which you must keep horses ; horses for which you must keep grooms ; an elaborate establishment to be ministered unto, and not to minister ; a world of complicated interacting conventionalism, of which you are, not the moving central force, but the helpless impersonal middle-point !

And, here, nature lavishly ministering to you with her abundance, magnificently overwhelming you with her pomp ; a life on her very breast, yet capable of some little succour to others ; a life vivid with the great mother's caresses and her indignation, the great beautiful passionate mother ! your heart vibrating in tune and time with hers, in every chord of rapture and terror, adoration and mirth !

Why should he wish for the narrow streets and the endless imprisonment, and the dull amusements and the prosaic prayers of that old conventional world ?

The sea broke at his feet as he rode by a negro hut under the broad shadows of plantains and palms, with a family of black children laughing and screaming and rolling over each other like puppies on the sand.

"Maurice would have had them in rows on a bench in the infant-gallery, saying A B C long before this," he said to himself, "and better there, of course, than knocked about by weary worn-out parents, or oppressing little victim nurses scarcely bigger than themselves."

But why should he wish to be in the cold dungeon we call civilised life, again ?

But then, as he consciously willed to raise the old pictures before him in such colours, other images involuntarily floated before him, surrounded by associations far deeper than the momentary action of his wilfulness, interwoven with his being ; memories of hymns sung by those English little ones of a "happy Land far away," and of One Supreme, here and there, *supremely loving*.

Also, other images, and another ideal ; of a life no more imprisoned in cities than this, the life Winifred had idealised for them both ; of the country doctor, braving cold and weariness and lonely moors and darkness and infection to succour poor English men and women and children. And Winifred there, beside him, always, to send him forth inspired to every difficult toil, to welcome him home and crown him with her love and sympathy ; a sympathy which would never weaken, a love which would always ennoble and inspire.

Yes, Winifred *might* have done this for him ! She might and she would not ! She had chosen to be ruled by the dead hand instead of the living, to renounce saving and ennobling a man's whole life just to make a few days of an exhausted, selfish, conventional dying life comfortable.

The bitterness of his own thoughts reacted on him.

No ! Winifred had done nothing of the kind. She had renounced him because she was too high for him. She did not know it, of course. She had thought perhaps she was sacrificing love to duty ; the strong fervent love that would have crowned and filled her life and his to the poor helpless failing love that could only demand and exhaust.

But in reality it had been an instinct of self-preservation.

She was worthy of something infinitely better, of a

nature high and steadfast and rich as her own. And no doubt she would find it.

The force and wealth of her life were not to be wasted in toilsomely straining his to a height above its natural level. It was ungenerous to wish it, ever to have wished it.

On the other hand, this tender, forlorn, yet motherly creature, who thought he had saved her boy, what if he could guard her life, and make her and the child happy?

It was no heroic ideal, but he was no hero. Ultimately no fountain can rise above its own level.

A life of a little work, real work, and a little play, real play, and many kindnesses, and much leisure—yes, leisure, that sacred breezy common-land and playground of humanity which high civilisations systematically invade and inclose; leisure to paint, to think, to feel; leisure to look and to listen and be still—Thérèse would not interfere with this. She would make a man's home a garden of roomy, easy leisure, not a part of the great solemn battle-fields and work-places, a series of delicious easy levels breaking that terrible "uphill all the way."

Yet, even as he reasoned thus, again his injustice recoiled on him.

Winifred would make the most toilsome and continuous uphill inspiriting as an Alpine climb, and the brief levels joyful goals and starting-places. Her voice itself (and the happy ringing tones came back almost audibly to him) was like a fresh breeze. If only he could hear it once more! But no doubt it was cheering others on now; *one* other probably; and for him could never more have any tones not belonging to all besides.

And so the ride and the inward debate went on, and might have gone on, but that the road happened to pass Thérèse's cottage, and it seemed a discourtesy not to turn in and ask how the child was.

And there, instead of the shadows, and the memories,

and the echoes, was the face pale but beaming with a smile of welcome, scarcely common to all the world; and the little face and hands, so soft, firm, and cool, which they together had felt so feverish and tremulous.

And the debate was over.

The child's and the mother's hand were pressed together unforbidden to his lips.

And one human creature was for the time at least perfectly content.

To Thérèse it was first love, almost it seemed first life, so entirely new was to her this delight of trust in one who would care for her supremely, and be her very own, and suffer her to live for him with the whole force of all the love that was in her, and give it back in such gracious and supreme returns as such god-like beings may and can.

She would never demand too much of him, of affection or self sacrifice, of effort or high achievement. She would never dream that he demanded too much of her in claiming her all for ever, all that she could be. Did not his love enable her to be all she could be, make a new being of her, altogether?

She knew nothing of Winifred Bertram. Had she known her, she would have thought of her as another of these new god-like creatures, and been content that she should be appreciated and adored, as the Olympians must naturally appreciate each other; at least, across the Atlantic.

To her was conceded this dear human nest with him which was all the world to her.

That it should be all the world to him, she never thought of claiming.

It was to be his nest, her nest, her boy's nest, their nest. She would make it warm and soft, and fair as a nest can be. And that was enough, certainly enough for her, apparently, as a nest, enough for him.

CHAPTER X.

IN the same little room which had been hers for twenty years, Winifred Bertram sat, in the dawn of a spring morning, at her open window, the little window which looked towards the east.

She was not watching the sunrise ; but she had opened the window through which the light would come, half instinctively and half consciously. " Entrance for every ray of light from every quarter of the sky " was the paramount thirst, and the determinate purpose of her heart.

In this way, she had met the storm which had quenched so much of the light of the hearth-fire within her heart.

It was of no use to say to herself it had not been a storm, and that it had not made the hearth bare and cold.

Winifred's was one of the natures on which the familiarity of habit had peculiar power ; what St. Augustine calls " that sweet and dear custom of living together." It extended with her even to places and things.

Mrs. O'Brien had often entreated her to migrate to some more stately chamber, instead of this bedroom of her childhood, opening on the room that had been her nursery. But she clung to the room where sacred words had first grown dear and clear to her, the room where she had had her first sisterly talks with Grace.

Anywhere else the furniture and the countless

memorials of time and love which had gradually clothed it would seem like specimens in a museum ; here, they were like living things in a garden.

None of the decorations had come by her own planning. From the sacred picture of the "Light of the World," the Sacred Face watching for the door to be opened (the door she had opened so long ago), to the last illuminated text executed by Baby May and framed and glazed by Eustace, all were links with other hearts and lives. With a strange kind of half perception, her eyes rested on the heterogeneous gathering of things which were so much more than mere things to her. The little china French poodle, with woolly hair half cut, which had been one of Rosalie's gifts ; the first present Grace had given her, the "Spray of Hawthorn," framed and glazed, not very professionally, by Harry Leigh ; the two shells, a delicate nautilus and a pink-lipped murex, which some years afterwards Harry Leigh had taken such pains to hunt through the old pawn-shops by the river-side to find for her.

The choice engravings and photographs from old masters, from Aunt O'Brien, and the beautiful books in worthy bindings, which had expanded their first habitation, the walnut book-shelves, into a richly-carved oaken book-case.

And then again the little childish tokens from her nephews and nieces, from a home not overflowing with money, but overflowing with love and life, which were not only inlets but outlets, not tokens of protective indulgent affection which centred in her, but of clinging love which needed and claimed her, and called her out to meet it. She saw them all, although she looked at none of them ; and then her mind reverted to the pearly nautilus and the rose-lipped murex.

The delicate colours of the dawn were in them, those *relics* from the dawn of her life.

It was not true, what some people tried indirectly to console her by saying, that Harry Leigh was not capable of persevering effort. With motive enough, he was ; she should always be sure he was capable of anything.

She wondered vaguely why people in love had not oftener thought of making shells their tokens of affection, as well as flowers.

The colours of flowers were in them ; of blush-roses and of creamy rose-buds, of passionate crimson damask roses, and purest translucent lilies.

The colours of flowers and of the sky ; of dawn even more than of sunset ; and they never faded.

Yes ; probably that was the instinctive reason. Only things that do not live cannot fade.

These shells were, after all, only sepulchres, monuments of the life that had once been in them ; the life that had moulded them, and perished out of them. The very condition of their coming into our possession was that the life which created them should have passed away.

It was a true instinct which had made the frailest and most perishable of flowers the tokens of love, and not the loveliest and most enduring of shells. The most colourless dried rose-leaf between the pages of an old letter, yellow and faded like itself, had more life in it than the most perfect shell glowing with rose and opal, and shining with the polish of the mighty waves which had tossed it hither and thither, yet left its most delicate spines unbroken.

For the rose-leaf had life enough to die. The shell was, after all, not a life, but only the cast of a living form. Was her life to be that, the lifeless cast of something that had once lived ?

With God's help, never ! With God's presence, who is the Life, impossible !

Yet some people's lives did seem to become like shells,

incapable of expanding as of perishing; fixed in a fair mould, not without colour or beauty, but unvarying, the same from year to year; specimens classified in the great museum of humanity, not human individualities tossed hither and thither on the common sea of life.

And was not this perfectly-ordered house of Aunt O'Brien's a little like, terribly like, such a museum?

No, thank God; it was not. It never could be. She was talking nonsense to herself.

If *life* could be banished from it, *death* could not; and death is but the winter side of life.

If human beings do not grow into richer developments in such a routine, at least they grow older, at least they fade; and that is something.

The best-preserved and most elaborately polished human being that ever was, cannot, thank God, *cannot* become a shell!

By the force of the imperishable life in it, it must fade, it must die.

The thought thrilled through her with a strange joy. But its own echo startled her.

Was she taking comfort from the side of death?—from the poor thought of the mere limitation of duration?—the poor, mean, jealous, bitter thought that the great leveller would come, and that then it would be the same for those who wept as for those who wept not, for those whose lives lost love had made empty as for those whose lives living hallowed love had made full?

It would *never* be the same. Unless immortality meant the immortality of a rose-leaf, immortality in becoming the soil of other roses, in becoming *something else*; which might indeed be immortality, mere deathlessness, but would not be life, human life, at all.

It would never be the same.

Yes! that line was long enough! It had fathomed the grief at last.

And Winifred knelt down and leant her head on the old "moan-book," and clasped her hands in anguish she could not control.

She would never certainly find consolation in the "moan-book" again. The deepest cravings and the deepest consolations which well up from the depths, or fall graciously from the heights to meet them, do not certainly so utter themselves, if they utter themselves at all.

It would never be the same.

It was not a *life* that was lost to her; it was *love*. Not life lost by dying, which to Christian faith is life lifted up to its highest power; and so, loving with its highest power, and waiting for reunion better, sweeter, higher, closer than of old, more human because more divine.

It was life lost by changing, by its whole current being set elsewhere, away from her, away from her for ever.

She must not even wish it in her inmost heart to be otherwise; for that would be to wish the life lost to her *lowered*; which would be to lose it a hundredfold more, to be separated from it a hundredfold further.

She did *not* wish it. Before heaven she did not wish it. God knew she did not wish it.

It was true that a foolish thought had flashed across her mind, that Thérèse's was not a first marriage, that, as she had heard some mystics believed, there could be only one true marriage of souls, and so this marriage might not be the true one for either of them.

But that thought came from without; it was but a breeze scented by passing over some unexplored corner of old dried memories. It was not *her* thought. She would not, did not, make it hers.

Or if (the subtle electric flash would not be shut out)—if by any possibility it were true, it could only be true by not being believed *here*.

For Harry Leigh's marriage to be the right thing for

him, or for any one, it must be a true marriage, body, soul, and spirit.

And as far as she could do anything for him, she would try to make it so.

And what did a true marriage mean?

She would, as was her wont, face the whole meaning, drink the whole cup.

In all the bitter cups our heavenly Father gives us to drink, there is no getting at the blessing and the healing in them, except by draining them.

A true marriage meant that husband and wife should make each other a constant rest, and a continual inspiration, loving each other, as they are, with the tender, full perception of what they are, yet through what they are at the lowest ebb, never losing the thought of what they can be at the fullest tide; and so helping each other, consciously and unconsciously, to be their highest, not any one else's very highest, but their own, which is God's for them; the fountain-head of all relationships, the queen of all friendships, a relationship which can no more cease with the cessation of its form in this life, than the relation to God can cease, Who sets as the strongest seal on our immortality the fact of His own immortal love.

More to each other, nearer to each other than any other, here and hereafter; for ever because here, here because for ever.

So utterly, she felt, had that current of affection on which her own hopes for life (she now knew too well) had floated, been swept—no, she must use no passive verb—swept itself away from her to another. So entirely must it now be set towards that other, if Harry Leigh was to rise and not to sink through it.

She raised her face, as that thought came, and leaning still on her clasped hands, ventured to look to the dawn.

Yes, she had found, at last, the path out of her dungeon.

Her heart had caught a glimpse of the light. And she would never lose it again.

In her inmost soul, what she desired most, what she had always desired most, was that Harry should rise and not sink; that he should be the best he could be, the tender, beautiful, self-sacrificing being she believed he could be; not one of the heroes who leap into the chasms, but one of the healers who brighten life for all around them, and make it healthy; make it healthy, in a great measure, by making it beautiful and bright, the healing being only one element in the artistic work of making beautiful.

She had thought she could do just what was needful to be a meet help to him in this.

God had made her bright and buoyant, had endowed her with no special faculties for special work, but just with that little womanly faculty of sympathy with other people's gifts, especially with Harry's. He used to say the very tones of her voice had inspiration in them; they rang like bells, not like any describable bells, not like Sunday bells, or wedding-bells, but like the typical meaning of all bells, calling to work, to festivity, to rest.

Yes, her voice had seemed that to him once!

—Ah! would those old sayings keep so often coming back now that they were only echoes of a vanished dream?—

A vanished dream! No, it was not a dream; and it had not vanished. All her voice could do to help him and his it should do still.

But, alas! what could that help be?

The bitterness came back again through that gate

To help him was not her vocation, never could be her work again.

How much it had been that! She had never quite known till now how much.

The nurse's work which was the woman's side, the helpmeet's side, of the physician's, was it indeed so much the thought of helping him that had made her year's training at the hospital seem such a light yoke and easy burden?

And the singing-lessons, the delight in the long practisings,—had it indeed been those words about her voice that had inspired her with something like artistic power in that one direction?

Ah! that was just what this separation meant. She was *not* to be the one to help him.

What then could she do?

His life had become twofold.

Could not she one day, not just now, perhaps (perhaps it was as well that just now Harry Leigh was in the West Indies), but when she was just a little more sober and middle-aged and decidedly *passée* than now, just take the twofold life to her heart, and in some unforeseen way help them both?

It would not, perhaps, be such an unendurable lot to be the best friend of both of them, as of Grace and Maurice, to help them without their even knowing who it was that was helping.

Never even to wish to have that first place, that look of perfect comprehension here, was not altogether easy, certainly not altogether easy yet.

And as she looked, the purples and rose-colours and delicate primroses and translucent opals of the morning sky faded into full colourless daylight.

"And this," she thought, "is what dawning into day means."

They faded in the sky; but they shone out on the earth. There in the garden, the greys were glorified into greens of all delicate and brilliant tints, into the crimson and gold and primrose and purple of the flowers; not mere lovely colour on vanishing vapour, but colour

living in blade and leaf and cups and bells of living blossoms.

“Yes, it means that!” she said. “The colours pass from the gorgeous visible aurora to the countless varieties of life the sun awakens and nourishes.”

And Winifred’s little parable for the morning was complete.

Then, as they had done twenty years before, as they had done twelve times every day, and twelve times every night through the twenty years since, heeded or unheeded, watched for with passionate eagerness, dreaded in long agonies of suspense, welcomed as the herald of some day of joy, accepted as the close of some day of loss, all the clocks rang out the hour of seven, the church clock solemnly from the hillside below, with a sweet Sunday music in its tone; the house clock ostentatiously from the stable, like a clock of respectability, which knew it was not every family that had a stable clock; the kitchen clock decisively, like a clock of business; the little French clock in what had been the nursery, hastily, like a clock of pleasure, always late, and therefore always in a hurry; and finally, heavily booming in deep tones behind all the rest, the great clock of the great city, like a clock burdened with the responsibility of keeping more than three millions of people in time.

Winifred heard them all, and wondered how often more she would hear them, and how she would bear the accumulation of the hours of the many years which could never bring her her very best, the one thing she had wished for, any more.

No, nevermore to her! But still other people’s best was something worth watching for, and through it, God’s very best might surely come to her!

It could, indeed, never more be what she had wished, what she had thought best.

But it would be the will of God.

And that was not to be accepted or done here without the "not" and the "but," the "*not mine, but Thine,*" which it was so terribly hard to say.

And yet it would be harder, really, to say, "Not thine, but mine;" harder certainly at the end, and really harder, more impoverishing, all through.

And then she smiled at herself for the old folly of the imaginary accumulation of the hours. The accumulation of the slowly-falling sand goes on, not in the future above our head, but in the past beneath our feet. And grain by grain they fall with no weight; and every grain may be the last.

So she dressed and went down-stairs; first performing a symbolical act by burying the old moan-book deep under a pile of dictionaries and old folios.

There was an uneasy attentiveness about Mrs. O'Brien's manner which Winifred found it difficult not to feel irritating.

She could not bear that everything should not go on as if nothing had happened. What had happened that any one had a right to connect with her?

But when they were left alone after the clearing of the breakfast-table, poor Mrs. O'Brien could not be content with vague attentions.

She came to the window where Winifred was standing, and throwing her arm around her, kissed her emphatically, and said,—

"My darling! You are all in the world to me. You will not forsake me. You will let me feel that I and everything I have are yours, and that you care a little for me."

Winifred could not speak.

The allusion, the claim, the benefaction, seemed at the *moment all equally intolerable fetters.*

Of course she never could forsake her aunt now!

She was bound by a threefold cord that could not be broken, precisely there for ever, for her earthly ever. Everything free and voluntary and delightfully uncertain had gone out of her life.

If the exquisitely kept lawn had only been a bit of un-cleared forest in Minnesota ; and Aunt O'Brien a dozen uncontrollable city arabs ! But it was all so terribly smooth, and so intolerably easy, and so impenetrably polished and hard.

Yet Mrs. O'Brien's dependent attitude, and her wistful look must be answered.

"You know, I have no one but you, Winifred !"

"You have me, dear Auntie, and always shall ; for as much or as little as I am worth."

"Worth ! my darling. Worth, indeed ! I always felt, we always could not help feeling worth a hundred-fold——"

"Dear Auntie, don't say that. I always knew, and I know, that was not true, and is not true, and by God's help never will or shall be true."

Mrs. O'Brien, altogether terrified by Winifred's vigorous defence out of any consolation in that direction, gave up the case as beyond her treatment, and retired, a little aggrieved on her own sorrows.

Wiping the tears from her own eyes with some natural compassion for herself, she said,—

"I have had my sorrows, also, Winnie."

Winifred was only too glad to reverse their positions.

"Dear Auntie," she said. "Indeed you have had sorrow. And I have had none, at least have none now that any one ought, that any one has a right to call sorrows. We will make each other as cheerful as we can ; and help other people as much as we can—won't we ? There are so many to help."

"I know, Winifred ! but I really do try. And you *know* I like of all things to help you. Only there are

demands which my health makes on me, which Dr. Dee says it would be suicidal to neglect."

"I know, dear Auntie;" and then, after a pause, "Which way shall we drive to-day? Into London or into the country? In the morning or in the afternoon? You know, Aunt Katharine is coming this evening from Combe."

"True," sighed Mrs. O'Brien, "I had almost forgotten. I am afraid I must take a tranquillising drive to-day, round by the lanes; and will you tell Rumbold to drive carefully down that last hill? Aunt Katharine does take a great deal out of one—there is so much in her—and I always feel it wiser to be prepared for it"

In the evening Aunt Katharine came.

And, the last thing at night, when she was in bed, and the maid had left, Winifred went for her customary bedside chat; not without feeling it wiser, like Mrs. O'Brien, to be "prepared for it." For, the twenty years since she, a little gallant child, had guarded Mr. Leigh against Aunt Katharine's disposition to be "fierce" with curates, had only advanced that vigorous Englishwoman from considerably past forty to considerably past sixty, and had by no means diminished her habit of approaching every end by the straightest road.

"Well, child," she said, "I might as well speak my mind at once. It is sure to come out one time or another, and if not, you are sure always to have an uncomfortable sense what it is, which would be like a perpetual mild mutual blister. I don't condole with you. And I congratulate every one else, myself especially. And of course I don't attempt to console you. Time will do that, and events; although of course you don't think so now. It is a deliverance for you both. And *so in time you will both find out, whether you acknowledge it or not.* Don't misunderstand me, my dear, I

don't expect you to acknowledge it. I certainly never would have, myself."

"Thank you, Aunt Katharine. I think that will do."

"Not quite, my dear. Don't be Quixotic, and make yourself miserable about his future. I have little doubt—being what he must be—he will be happier with his little Canadian, and perhaps better. Yes, perhaps *better*, which would no doubt console you, if you could believe it. You would always have been winding him up; always with the most exquisite tact, my dear, I know, and in the most cheerful and respectful way. But winding up is about the most uncomfortable process a husband can be subjected to by a wife, especially when the metal does not suit. Either it becomes too thin for any practical purpose, or it snaps, and snaps naturally in the face of the wife. Now, no doubt all that will be let alone, and the metal won't snap, and will be serviceable for all such limp and easy uses as it was made for—training flowers on, for instance."

"Aunt Katharine," said Winifred, "you are too unjust! Would it be any consolation to tell you that any one you loved was not dead, but annihilated? The whole being and character gone, blotted out, not there, never there! I know what Harry Leigh was and is."

"I was not attempting to do such a weak thing as console you, my dear," said Lady Katharine. "And as to annihilation, some people do consider that pleasanter than being permanently uncomfortable or wicked. But, to be logical, what never existed cannot be annihilated, which, you perceive, is the form this question takes between you and me."

The flash of indignation had passed, and with it the tears, the tremulousness from Winifred's voice.

"Aunt Katharine," she said quite calmly and gently, looking straight into the kind keen eyes, "you and I understand each other. But you don't understand

Harry ; you never did, and perhaps you never will. I can't help that, any more than I can help it that I do understand him. I think what you say may be, and I trust with my whole soul it will be, true, that it is better for him as it is. Some people grow higher by just being depended on. I liked Thérèse's letter to Grace. It was simple as a child's, with a true womanliness in it. I think she is a creature I should love. And certainly, certainly it will do him good to be loved as she loves him."

But at that point the eyes drooped a little, and the fervour passed from her voice.

Lady Katharine did not reply for a minute, and then her voice was a little husky as she said—

"My dear, it is the greatest mistake in the world to say we are made alike. It does me the greatest good in the world, on suitable occasions, to be angry, and even to hate a little ; indeed, to hate heartily the wrong things, if not the wrong-doing people, which is a metaphysical distinction I can't say I have ever been able always practically to maintain. But apparently that is not the remedy that suits you."

"Aunt Katharine," said Winifred, "it is not a dream of mine, an ideal, a hero of a girl's romance you are talking of. It is Harry Leigh ! He is *there*. He has to live, to live on, to be himself for ever. I know what he is ; I know what he could be. How can anything ever be sweet to me, but that he should be the highest he could be ? I used sometimes to think I could help him. But God must know."

"My dear Winifred," replied Lady Katharine, recovering from her softening, "that I really can't stand. Don't, for heaven's sake, lay the blame either on Providence or yourself. That is really more than I can stand. People take wrong turnings, throw away their best opportunities—and they *are* wrong turnings, and lead wrong ; and

the best opportunities they throw away *are* thrown away. I don't say they can't be led back, so as not to be altogether wrong at last. But Providence does not make up to us for lost time, or pick up for us the pearls we have thrown to the swine. If we refuse the best, we may kindly be allowed still to choose the second or the third best. Our Father, happily, has more than one blessing for us. But don't entangle things. Lost is lost. Second best is, not best, and never will be. Above all things, I hate muddle, in life, in love, in faith, in theology. I have seen many prodigals mended, but muddle never."

"Aunt Katharine," Winifred answered softly and very gravely, "the tangle *is there*. I didn't make it. At least," she added very gravely, "I think I didn't. And it is not the only tangle in the world, it seems to me. I think nearly everything is in a tangle, and has been for a long time; whether you call it original sin or imperfect development. But if God cannot come to us exactly at the lowest where we are, and lift us up to the highest we could be, from any depth to any height, I don't see the meaning of the Incarnation, or Redemption, or the Holy Spirit, or anything in Christianity or in life. And I feel absolutely sure, Aunt Katharine, all through me, reason and heart, that whatever life and the world may be, Christianity is not a tangle, not another problem to add to the ten thousand already existing, but the guiding thread through the labyrinth, the solution, whenever and wherever and however we lay hold of it. Or rather, I don't mean *it*, not *any It*, Cross or Church or Dogma. I mean, whenever I lay hold of *Him*, suffering, loving, redeeming, forgiving, restoring. That is what I believe, Aunt Katharine." And she raised her eyes again to meet the bright, militant, searching gaze fixed on her. "That is what I believe for *every one*."

"Then believe it, child!" said Lady Katharine, giving in, but with a reluctant shake of her head. "Of course,

from that point of view there is no room left for making the worst of the people we suffer through, or the least of losses ; for pessimism or optimism, or for hatred or anger, or any of the minor consolations. I confess a little insular east wind, sharp and clear, is reviving to me. But no doubt, if you climb high enough, the mere height makes the air clear ; and if you can breathe on those heights, no doubt the air is wholesome for any of us. At any rate," she concluded, with a rare and very radiant smile, "the air you breathe seems wholesome enough for you.—There! go away, and don't crumple my night-cap. Don't you know I am the only creature left, baby or old woman, who wears a night-cap, and that it is as sacred as an Egyptian antiquity?"

CHAPTER XI.

WINIFRED BERTRAM'S first visit had to be paid to Maurice and Grace, with the consciousness that her whole life had changed its direction, and that every one knew, and yet that nothing must seem to be changed, and that no one must seem as if they knew anything had happened.

She could not help observing just a little more chivalrous attention in the manner of the boys, and a touch of reverent tenderness about the girls.

Walter would run to the other end of London to change a skein of silk for her. Eustace listened, as if her opinion, although of the obsolete generation, were really worth something, and Austin confidentially lent her a Life of St. Catharine of Sienna, which he would have thought it profanation to lay open to less sympathetic inspection.

Maurice said once, when they were coming home from the evening service on Maunday Thursday—

“We had hoped for something very different. But we will do our best to make the best of it for Harry and his wife, and all. We know that is what you would wish.”

There was a depth of confidence in her in his tone which seemed to lift her up more than anything. He did not pity, he trusted her; just because he understood her.

After a minute they walked on in silence.

Then she said—

“Of course I knew you and Grace would understand. And I have been thinking so often of an old sermon of yours, about every joy and sorrow in our lives being a landing-place, with an ascent and descent on either hand, from which we must either go downward or upward. “Downward or upward” were the watchwords of the sermon. I want you to preach it again, Maurice.”

“Such an insinuation as to my preaching! To think I would preach twenty years’ old sermons! I couldn’t, Winifred, if I tried. The people who listen to them are changed, and I am changed, and everything is changed but the truth; and that, by virtue of its essential immutability, changes its vesture continually.”

“Very well,” she said; “I will go on preaching it to myself. I can do it very well by this time.”

“It is the preaching things to ourselves,” he replied, “that makes them living. When I do not first preach my sermons to myself, I feel they become either essays launched into the air, which placidly float there; or railings at my neighbour’s faults, which every one applies pointedly to *his* neighbour.”

Accordingly, on the next Sunday, Maurice preached one of a series to which he often recurred—on the practical heresies everywhere acknowledged and nowhere extirpated; the heresies with regard to the relations of God to us; the heresies against hope and against love.

He said that the heresies against Hope were among the most inveterate; that we might almost cling to faith by an act of our will; that we do cling to love in some directions by our own natural, unquenchable power of loving; but that to continue to hope for ourselves and others with a real true hope, not a mere confused haze of sanguine optimism, but a hope as real as the darkness it hopes against, required continual communion with the *Fountain of hope*, with Him who hoped for His three

frail apostles through their slumbering, for St. Peter through his denial, and for all the disciples through their forsaking ; for the multitudes through the " crucify Him," and for humanity through the Cross.

To believe that the sun is there, behind the clouds ; to believe that life is in the wintry trees, " under the ribs of death," is one thing. But vividly to hope that the sun will shine, and to hope to see the leaves open and hear the birds sing, is another.

And yet it is by hope that we are saved ; saved from despondency as to our own vocation, which is the death of effectual work, and from cynicism as to others, which is the death of practical service.

Half of our work is waiting, and hope is the inspiration of waiting ; that is, hope makes waiting *active*, instead of *passive*, a vivid expectation, instead of a slumbrous acquiescence in delay.

" If we hope for a thing, then do we with patience wait for it."

Faith rests on an absolutely satisfactory reason.

Love has a world of her own, sublimely independent of reason, and, if strong enough, makes unreasonable things reasonable by force of loving.

But hope, as to human character, our own and that of others, has to act against reason ; that is, has to sustain herself continually by the reasons of the higher life against the semblances of the lower.

When we have failed in conquering a temptation nine times, it is reasonable to think we shall fail the tenth. But Hope lays hold on the promise of victory, and on Him who goes forth conquering and to conquer, and defies experience, and overcomes.

When we have seen any dear to us take, time after time, the easy turning a little downward, instead of the arduous path upward, it is reasonable to think the course is set downward, and cannot change.

But Hope sees at every fresh turning still the possible double way, and keeps Faith awake to pray, and cheers Love from weeping to working. And at last, perhaps at the last possible turning, Hope prevails, and in the end the uphill path is chosen, and the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense is scaled, and the last is first, as happens, we know, not seldom even here, and as we are told so often happens in the hierarchy of the land that is very far off.

“If we hope for a thing,” he concluded, “let us with patience wait for it ; and that we may have patience to wait, let us with fervour hope for it ; and if we would hope, let us cling with our whole souls continually to the God of hope, to Him who, foreseeing the cross, hoped for all men, and, enduring the cross, hoped for His executioners ; Who foreseeing what the world would be, and the Church, how love would wax cold, and faith dim, yet hoped for the Church that she would be one, as the Father and the Son are one, and for the world that it would believe on Him through the Church ; to Him Who we are sure, is hoping still for humanity, for the distracted Church, and for the wandering world, and for every distracted and wandering soul amongst us, hoping still as no heart on earth has learned to hope, because He loves as no heart on earth can love.

“And now unto Him who is seated on the right of God, expecting till his enemies be made His footstool, such a rest for His feet, if they will, as the penitent made when she bathed them with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head ; unto Him, who, because He hopes for us, with patience waits for us, to Him Who is in us, the Hope of glory, to Him be glory, as in Him is our hope.”

Something in these words of Maurice moved Winifred to the heart, in the church with an inspiration of living hope, afterwards in her room to a flood of tears. The *windows* of heaven were open, and the fountains of the

great deep were broken up, and out of the flood came forth to her once more new heavens and a new earth.

She came forth, no more living on the ruins of an older dispensation, but in the power of a new life.

A world of vivid, reasonable, noble, personal hopes for herself and Harry Leigh was submerged. But a new world of vivid hope began to grow green around her, like the valley of the Nile after the inundation.

Other people's lives seemed to become hers in altogether a new sense, by the simple fact of her becoming in altogether a new sense theirs.

She seemed endowed with a new power of living in and through those she loved, not compassionately or helpfully or sympathetically only, but actually.

It was as if in the artistic world a quiet observer, or a lyrical singer, or a graphic narrator from outside had become invested with dramatic genius, and was empowered to live in life after life, to act, think, feel in character after character spontaneously springing up at his magic invocation.

In comparison with it her previous life seemed to have been spent in shadow, her own shadow, the "shadow over which none of us can spring."

She had no theory that the life she was called to was higher than the life she had lost. She thought it, in the abstract, in its discipline, its impoverishings, its enrichings, the lower of the two.

But, for herself, the thought of thus comparing her own life with that of others had passed away.

Dreams and abstractions had passed away. She lived, as never before, in a world of persons, of other personalities as loving, as dear, as interesting as her own, because the world of the one Divine Personality infinitely dearer than her own; all centred in One, the true Centre of all, whose "Mary" was answered with "Rabboni" by herself, and would be by each in turn.

It was freedom, such freedom as we might feel if the fetters of gravitation were broken, and replaced by vital force, which could soar anywhither, and rest anywhere.

It was simply that she had turned with her whole being, as never before, to the Sun, the Light of the world, that in doing so she had been set free, as never before, from the fetters and shadows of self.

Such possibilities of highest healing there are for us in all sorrow, if only pressed tight enough to the heart.

Her own romance was finished, and she was free to enter, heart and soul, into the stories of those around her.

It was not, indeed, finished in the sense of a book closed. It was finished in the sense of a language learned, which gave her the key to the literature written in it.

It had not been a dream. It had been the deepest reality in her life; its joys and hopes and its sorrows had been real, and therefore by their light and glooms she could translate the histories of others.

Every new human experience gives such a key to many chambers in other hearts secret to us before, if we do not use it to lock ourselves in. And there are some human hearts so deep and tender that they seem to have a skeleton-key which opens all doors. Chiefly these are such as live habitually near Him in whose hands are all the keys of life and of death.

This was the level to which Maurice's sermon lifted her, at which by degrees she came to live. But not always, yet.

A new attraction seemed to draw Winifred to her old friend, Miss Lavinia Lovel. Miss Lavinia's sister, Miss Betsey, had died three years before, vigorous and militant with this degenerate age to the last, thanking God that

her blindness had never returned, and persuaded to the last that one of the great proofs and chief significances of a future life was the necessity that justice should be done to Lavinia for all the under-estimate of gifts and over-tasking of powers she had encountered here.

It was an especial mercy to her, Miss Betsey thought, that heaven had been pictured like a city as well as like a garden.

In a city there must be something for every one to do, and some people to care for; and one would not be expected always to be sitting still, and "being grateful," enjoying oneself. She had proved the unsatisfactoriness of that once at dear Lady Katharine's wish, when they tried to retire to the country cottage she had prepared for them at Combe.

There was nothing really more heavenly, she considered, in a garden than in a street.

After all, flowers, even roses, were only vegetables; and the very lowest butcher's dog was higher than any vegetable, as certainly as the most ragged, barefooted child was higher than any butcher's dog.

And, to her thinking, the rumble of carts was as poetical and "romantic" as the purling of brooks, or that dreadful roar of the Atlantic. She did feel thankful she was not to hear *that*, in another life!

The carts were driven by men who by that means were earning food and clothing for women and little children; and if you happened to know a few of the carmen, as she did, and to have seen the wife's face welcoming them home, and the children watching for them, and the tender way in which they would sometimes set their babes on the backs of the great gentle beasts for a ride, you might easily get to feel that there was something as interesting in the rumbling of cart-wheels over the streets as in the scuttling of millions of drops of water from a pool on the moors to the sea.

It might have seemed more natural that Lavinia should have gone first ; she did seem likely to be more at home *there* ; and it was difficult to see how the tradespeople would be kept in their places, and Lavinia ever kept up to her duties as to watching Mrs. Mowlem with tea and sugar.

However, one thing was certain ; Lavinia, on her side, always kept close enough to the Gate of Heaven, so that probably there was mercy in it.

They would be less separated so.

If, through merits certainly not her own, she were really let in, as Lavinia and Grace and Mr. Bertram thought she would be, her place would certainly not be far out of any one's reach ; whereas, if Lavinia went first, and there were degrees of reward, she might be out of sight and reach, long before she could follow (especially if she herself had been left alone to contend with the tradespeople and Mrs. Mowlem, without having Lavinia to do it for).

It did seem strange, was one of her last thoughts, that the doors of the better world did not open double for some people !

It was certainly very babyish in her, an old woman of eighty ; but she had never thought of going to heaven, any more than of going to church or to the Sacrament, without Lavinia.

But surely she would be allowed to wait very close inside the door until Lavinia came. It would not be expected of her that she could give her whole attention to anything until then.

Most of these things were said to Grace.

For Lavinia, there was only the wistful, longing look that never seemed to leave her.

"There is one thing that sometimes puzzles me, *Gracie*," Miss Betsey said one day, going back to the *childish name*, which her respect for dignities seldom

suffered her to use since Grace had become the rectoress. "It is about loving God best. We ought, you know; but I can't tell how to compare that with me and Lavinia. Of course, I don't want to leave her, to go anywhere. I never could say I should. It was always *we*, you know, for us; not like marriage even. There was no beginning to the *we*. If indeed by His great love we are together in heaven, you know, Gracie, I shall owe it to her, every step of the way. No doubt *we* shall love Him best then. Gracie, do you think that will do?"

"I think," said Grace very tenderly, "He gave you the love, and gave you the dear double life, all the way, and if there is anything more for you to learn, He will teach it you, just in the little while you have to wait. I think God has many secrets still to show us, but I am quite sure they will all be secrets of goodness and beauty and love. How can it be otherwise, He being what He is?"

"You think then that we shall *learn* there?"

"I think we shall *live* there, and see and listen and love. How can we help learning?"

"That is a comfort. I have so much to learn, and she has so little. It is a comfort to think I might be made a little more fit to welcome her. Gracie, you have comforted me."

And very soon after that, Miss Lavinia was left in the little lodging alone.

When Winifred came to see her first, after the news of Harry from the West Indies, she was out on some errand of kindness.

Winifred looked over the familiar old furniture—the pale water-colours to which Miss Betsey had been so loyal—the silhouettes of clerical and military ancestors in bag-wigs, and among them some delicate early sketches by Grace, down to the last contribution—an illuminated text by *Baby May*.

She looked over the chamber of relics with a curious fellow-feeling.

Twenty years hence would not her room look just like this to the vigorous young generation ?

A feeble and rather uncertain step was heard on the stairs, and Winifred rose from her reverie.

The pale, faded look which had been Miss Lavinia's through middle life had become glorified by her white hair into something that did not make you think of flowers, or vesture, or things that fade, but rather of halos, and sunshine, and heavenly elements, that help others to grow.

The white hair gave a soft glow by contrast to the face, and brought out the blue in the grey eyes, just as snow on the hills brings out the delicate tints of a winter sunrise.

"*We* are the true antiquarians and reverent relic preservers, Miss Lavinia," said Winifred, when they had sate down. "We do for our families what the calm Orientals have done for the Holy Land. Ten years of Anglo-Saxon activity would change Jerusalem more than the past ten centuries. The past for its very own sake is precious to us. Our own childhood is to us like a child."

Miss Lavinia looked troubled.

She did not like that *we*. She wanted to disclaim all thought of being on a level with the bright rich life which thus claimed affinity with hers.

"My dear Miss Winifred," she began, in a deprecating tone—"we !"

"No, *not* we, indeed !" said Winifred, for the first time suffering the trouble to utter itself to any one. "I know it can never be the same. You have a meeting before you ; I have none even to wish for."

And the pain acknowledged to no one else was wept out on the old maid's tender heart. She knew no

accusations against Harry would have to be rebutted thence.

"My dear, my dear!" sobbed Miss Lavinia, "I did not mean that."

"So bright, so young, so loved by so many!" were the thoughts in her heart, but she understood too well to say so. She only said—

"My dear, my dear! it is no good trying to understand. Whatever you do, don't try to understand. Don't try to make out *why* it went wrong for him or for you; or even *how* it is to come right for any one. Just lay your hand, blind and numb and helpless, in the hand of God. He understands, but we don't. It is like climbing to His throne to try."

"Oh, Miss Lavinia," Winifred said, after a long silence, "indeed, it is not *we*. You at the threshold of that better life, with meetings before you; I at the threshold of the afternoon of this life with none."

It was a relief, she felt, to wring out the whole bitterness where it would not perplex the hearer's faith or wound Harry's reputation; for once, to let some one else provide the answers she had tried to give herself.

"Don't perplex yourself with the 'we,'" said the old lady, her tremulous old voice growing firm with depth of sympathy. "It hurts me to hear you classify yourself with me; or indeed," she added, rising into a courage rare with her, "to classify old maids together at all. I regret it even on my own account. Old maids are as different as mothers, or as young maidens. There are rich and poor, dependent and independent, motherly old maids as well as old maidish matrons. Nature is as different in them, and the training of life has been as varied, as for any one else. My sister Betsey and I were not much alike, except in our love for each other. And think how different I am, and always was to you. A shadowy noiseless childhood and youth, my chief

ambition to creep through the years as little in any one's way as possible. Then the attachment, subordinated to so many necessities and demands of other people, with so little hope, that its memory almost seemed as substantial as itself. And *you*, living in every fibre, loving, and loved and wanted, almost worshipped, by so many, do you think all that glow and substance will ever pass out of your heart and life, and make it creep pale and slow like mine? You are what those years have made you, my dear; you can never lose them, or yourself. *Privations* may make our life poor, on its earthly side, but *losses* of things do not, cannot take away the enriching their possession gave. No, my dear, don't classify old maids, any more than other human beings who happen to be alike in one thing; such as having one eye, or a wooden leg, or ten children, or none. And certainly never classify yourself with me."

"Well, Miss Lavinia," said Winifred, smiling, "I will not venture on such an ambitious step again, at least not yet."

On returning to the Rectory, a little eager watching face disappeared from the window above the front door, and a tumult of welcome from Baby May and Dot greeted her as she entered her brother's house.

Coming from Miss Lavinia to the little one seemed coming from a child on the threshold of the deathless life to the child at the threshold of his.

They all loved her; but between her and May had sprung up one of those instinctive friendships which Jeremy Taylor says are the deepest core even of the love of brotherhood, when they are joined to it, and can be closer than brotherhood when apart from it. The *Wahlverwandschaft* had been added to the relationship *between* May and Winifred.

In an intimate, unutterable sense each felt a peculiar

belonging to the other; and the tender mutual possession—the sense of being so loved and wanted by the child, not for anything she did or had, but just *for herself*, was a balm to Winifred of mightier healing than she knew.

Such balms are so often shed best by hands unconscious of the wound they heal.

CHAPTER XII.

AT length the day was fixed for Walter's joining his ship.

The Long Parliament received a conscious accession of solidity from the sense that one of its members, and that one the youngest, was actually embarked on a profession.

Austin and his father had, on a recent Monday Popular, explored the antiquities of Southwark.

They had explored the old Tabard (or Talbot) Inn, with its large inner court and its quaint rooms opening on balustraded galleries, and also other similar hostelries in the ancient High Street, whence, as well as from the Tabard, the pilgrims might probably have set out for the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury.

He had also gone carefully over the beautiful old Lady Chapel of St. Mary Overy, subsequently St. Saviour's, Southwark, once the Consistorial Court of Bishop Gardiner, and had seen the painted windows in honour of the English Protestant martyrs, and the quaint monument to the poet Gower, with its appeals in Norman French to the mercy of Jesus; and he had also seen with horror where the noble Norman nave had stood, swept away by the barbarism of forty years ago, leaving the three upper arms of the cross miserably *truncated*.

He came back fervent for the ages of faith, the simple

days of pilgrimage, the glorious days of unity and beauty before the scission of England from the rest of Christendom.

Eustace protested that the ages of pilgrimage did not apparently seem so very simple, or so very devout to Chaucer.

Margaret gently remonstrated that England was not cut off from Germany, Denmark, or Sweden, or the United States.

Monica said her mother thought it was not the Reformation, but a general wave of barbarism as apparent in the Jesuit Churches abroad as in ours, which had destroyed the nave of St. Saviour's.

Walter vehemently affirmed it was better to level a hundred Norman naves than to burn one Bradford.

Austin rejoined that it was not the Roman Church, but the barbarism of three hundred years ago, that burned Bradford.

And the House was getting into a general *mêlée* when Eustace interposed.

"It is time we gave up discussing the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and even the Revolution, and turned to something practical," he said.

At this Monica, who was one of those for whom history *lived*, fired up.

"Nothing is practical," she said, "if everything is not practical. It is as practical not to misjudge Luther and Latimer, Oliver Cromwell, or Charles I., or poor Marie Antoinette, or even that unfortunate St. Saviour's vestry, as to make Walter's shirts. 'Thou shalt not bear false witness' is as practical as 'Thou shalt not steal.'"

"Certainly! 'No scandal, if you please, about Queen Elizabeth,'" said Eustace drily, quoting Sheridan.

"But, Eustace, I really do think scandal about Queen Elizabeth wrong," pleaded Monica. "It is worse when people are dead."

"Not exactly for them, at least, after three hundred years," said Eustace cynically. "However, party questions, ecclesiastical or political, belong for us just now to the past. The questions of the day for us are social questions. Walter is on the point of being launched. Whose turn is it next?"

"I have so often thought of it," said Monica. "I do so want to help."

"How selfish of me never to have thought of it!" said Margaret.

Every one smiled.

"As if Mother Margaret's profession were not definite enough," said the chorus, "between the sewing-machine and the infant-school, and nursing mother, and mothering May and the whole parish."

"I have a certificate of capability to teach a national school," said Margaret blushing, but apparently reassured. "Only just now does not seem the time for using it."

"And Monica has certificates for everything," said Eustace, "equivalent to honours at both universities."

Monica looked up imploringly.

Austin intervened.

"Monica has two professions," he said. "She can teach things that are paid for, and she can paint pictures that sell. It is you and I, Eustace, who are helpless. Or really it is only I. Your civil service examination will soon come, and then if you succeed, all the English world, in both hemispheres, is open to you. For me there are all those university expenses, and then——"

"You are sure of that scholarship!" said Monica. "But that is what I mean. I do seriously intend to ask to go out and give lessons, to help. I had thoughts of the Felix Hunters."

Austin flushed.

"To be a governess," he said reproachfully, "and for me!"

"Austin, you know better," she said. "You know father thinks, and we all think, it is as high a thing for a woman to teach, as for a man. We are only waiting for our feminine Dr. Arnold to prove it to every one."

"But with those set-up intolerably rich people, and cousins!" remonstrated Austin.

"One of them is a Sister, Austin," said Monica, smiling, "an associate sister, at least. Perhaps that may make up in some degree for the rest being cousins."

"But for me," he said, "I would rather beg my way like the scholars in old times."

"Or sing it, like Luther, no doubt," said Eustace. "But you see, since then, there are the poor laws, Queen Elizabeth's vagrant laws, and all the rest."

"Think of the happiness for me!" said Monica softly.

"Yes, don't forget that!" said Margaret.

"If I were only sure I should do any good with it after all," he said despondently.

"We know you will," said both sisters.

"And father expects it," added Monica.

"And mother is sure," rejoined Margaret.

"Have you actually spoken of it to them?" demanded Austin suspiciously.

"Only once to father," replied Monica apologetically.

"And he won't hear of it?" said Austin.

"On the contrary, he enters heart and soul into it," she replied. "And as soon as Walter leaves, we are to see about it. You know father always wished the girls should have one profession, and one handicraft, by which they could live, as well as the boys. The handicraft in case of shipwreck, family or national; the profession for ordinary times. As to the handicraft, all of us could really earn our daily bread as seamstresses; *that is, could really finish things fit for sale, and Margaret*

could certainly cook, besides the general training doing any one handicraft effectually gives one's hands. And teaching is really the thing it makes me happiest to be doing, independent of anything else gained through it. I should stay at home, and go out to give lessons, be a 'professor,' in short, especially of history, and make people understand what a glorious old England it is **that belongs to us, and to which we belong.**"

CHAPTER XIII.

WALTER'S leave-takings were many and most cordial, though fuller on his side of hope than of regret.

With an optimist ignoring of perplexities, he had a truly English incapacity for enduring inconveniences that could be remedied, for himself or for others.

And many a poor woman's room bore witness to his ingenuity in the form of shelves and cupboards, and mended tables and chairs, occupations which had, on the other hand, brought him into such practical intercourse as only working together can foster with many a working man.

His nautical tastes, moreover, gave him a large range of alliances on that side, and wherever he went there was in him an instinctive repugnance to what was low, and a quick perception of what was highest, which were in themselves a Sir Galahad's shield for himself and all who associated with him.

Books were not his world, only the instruments by which he could master his world ; and money he had no especial talent for keeping, there were so many who wanted it more, and Walter never could be made quite " sound " as to the poor laws. But he had the accuracy of one accustomed to have to do with things rather than words ; with boats that would not sail until their curves were absolutely true, with geometrical observations that

came to nothing unless strictly right, with calculations in which deficiencies could by no means be supplied with convenient entries of "sundries."

His room was as neat as Miss Lavinia Lovel's. And his supervision over his sisters' dress was keen to severity.

He had no great gift of words, but his class in the Sunday-school learned their Scriptures and Collects more thoroughly than any one else's, and when he was gone to sea more than one of them came to his father to ask to be prepared for Confirmation; and one poor lad with a bad home and a wild temper never rested until he got into Master Walter's ship. To follow Master Walter seemed to them the highest thing they could do, and to be with him the pleasantest.

Between him and Miss Lavinia there had long existed a romantic attachment. The dear old lady adored in him the military and naval glory of her ancestors, and the institutions of her country in general, and it would be difficult to say what chivalrous and protective instincts combined with a loyal reverence for a high race fallen, in the boy's thoughtful deference for her.

"What shall I give you?" she said, when Walter came to take leave of her in full uniform. "Sailors have so little room. I had thought of our great-grandfather the admiral's Prayer-Book. His wife gave it him before they were married. It was small and dainty for those days, but it seems large and clumsy for these, and it only prays for George III. and Queen Charlotte, and no doubt your mother and sisters have the best right to give you anything so sacred as that. Only it was with him at Trafalgar, and has been shot through the binding. He was writing a letter to his wife on it when the action began. He fought, and he prayed, and his men loved and obeyed him and feared him."

Walter's eyes shone.

"That is the kind of English history I like," he said.

"There'll always be room for this, even in a shipwreck."

"Sister Betsey would have been proud to see this day," she said.

And the tears stopped the little old-fashioned speech she had meant to make him. She only said,—

"I have written Nelson's Trafalgar motto in it. I could find no better."

The last Monday afternoon walk with his father was to the height beyond Hampstead, whence the telegraph had signalled northward the coming of the Spanish Armada, and on the way back through the Abbey where Nelson had wished to be buried.

London was no vulgarised cockneydom to Maurice Leigh's children.

It was one of his theories that if our own country and its history are not sacred to us, the Holy Land itself would have a mere antiquarian interest, Jerusalem would be a mere place for cockney sight-seeing, and the Bible a mere skeleton sermon-book.

In after years Walter would have given much to recall every step of that walk, and every word of his father's conversation.

But the one impression left on his mind was the existence of England, wrought to what she is by the life-service and life-blood of her sons, and only to be made what she ought to be by service as faithful now ; of a sacred patriotic story in which our brief lives are also to be sacred pages, a story of struggle against wrong, and obedience to law ; of loyalty and liberty ; of authority strictly regarded because of the authority of conscience, recognised as highest of all ; of liberty loved with passion, and loyalty devoted because free ; of wrongs at home redeemed before they became irremediable by revolution ; of wrongs of other races redressed by English blood and gold.

"There are three professions from which the old country claims service as from her sons, not from her hired servants," Maurice Leigh said, "the clergy, the army, and the navy. She claims our lives with a grand motherly imperiousness, taking little pains to promise us anything in return. If other kinds of pay come, it is all very well; but it is beyond the bond. From us all she simply expects our duty, that is life; and, if needful, death. But then she incorporates us with her very life, makes her honour ours, lives and grows through our lives. And I think the pay is good."

Often Walter tried afterwards to recall if his father had given any especial directions or warnings to himself on that Monday afternoon, anything like an especial text from the Bible, or a direct religious teaching.

But always it came back to that one image of England, seen through a glow of self-devotion; of the Divine call for him being to be as true to England as Drake, and Effingham, and Nelson were; of an England as well worth serving now as she was then; of a life as well worth living now as any ever lived anywhere at any time; of faith in our country, rooted in faith in God; of an England served in country parsonages and in city parishes, and in ships at stations all over the world; kept in imperial rule, or saved through a tempest of mutiny by a handful of her sons; to be disgraced and displayed by nothing but the unworthiness of her sons.

Sometimes Walter longed to have had something more like a farewell blessing. But less and less, as he grew to feel that the world is served best, not through a dreamy cosmopolitanism, but through strenuous patriotism; all countries best through one; all the Church best through our own branch of it; and that the heavenly country *grows lucid* to our vision as we forget self in serving the *earthly Fatherland* which is its type.

CHAPTER XIV.

“DORA and Dorothy demand the suffrage!” said Walter, at the last session of the Long Parliament, before his departure, “and intend to elect themselves members.”

“We might as well have constituents and reporters at once,” remonstrated Eustace. “We shall have to become severely reasonable and practical. The poor children will mind what we say. For instance, how could we discuss before these innocent babes the subject on my mind to-night, whether there is or can be any such thing as history? They have scarcely got beyond believing implicitly in Mrs. Markham.”

“They might do worse,” retorted Austin. “But I am afraid they are far beyond those ages of faith already. I heard Baby May the other day seriously defending Oliver Cromwell to Dot.”

Monica interposed seriously.

“If there is no such thing as history,” she said, “there is no such thing as truth.”

“Pardon me,” said Eustace, there is the spectroscope. You can know certainly what metals Sirius is composed of, and what gases are surging up in those volcanoes in the sun, although you may have to hold your judgment in suspense to the end about Charles I., or Henry VIII., or the causes of the French Revolution. The more I think of it, Monica, the more I feel sure that history is

an impossibility. Not one person in a hundred can tell you accurately what he sees with his own eyes. One half the people are too near to see the whole of anything ; and the other half are too far to see the details of anything ; and nine-tenths are watching as eager partisans, and think it a matter of conscience not to see anything contrary to their opinions, or not to say so if they do."

"Nevertheless we do believe each other's report of things in the main. Otherwise we should sink from nations of men into herds of animals," said Monica.

"Of things, of events, perhaps," said Eustace. "But who believes reports of other people's characters? Who knows any other person's character?"

"All the people together know something," replied Austin ; "your schoolfellows, your fag, if you might have one, the other ten of your eleven at cricket, your masters, and your brothers and sisters, might make up something of a true portrait between them."

"But suppose one century believed your fag, and he was a sneak ; and the next century believed your French master, who hated you for not appreciating Racine more than Shakespeare ; and the next believed in your Eleven, who adore you as their Captain ; and the fourth believed in your brothers who naturally misunderstood, and your sisters who naturally snubbed you, it would take a long time before posterity struck the right balance."

Monica's large grey eyes grew fierce, and her words tumbled over each other in her eagerness. "If you take away the people of the past from us," she said, "the good and great men and women, you take away half our human nature, and half our Christianity."

"Well, but think, Monica," said Eustace, "how few *people understand* those you love best enough even for *you to care* they should praise them. Take father, for *instance*, who would you trust to write the history of his

life and work in this parish? The publican, whose disorderly tavern he closed? Or the good people who said he was little better than a 'Roman' because he praised St. Francis Xavier? Or the other good people who said he was little better than a Dissenter because he quoted Baxter? Or the district visitors he restrained in indiscriminate tricklings of shillings? Or the poor weary people who hang on his words, as if every one of them was a drop of the water of life? Think of the grateful people who idolise him too much to see him any clearer than they see the sun at noon-day. And think of the petty carping people who think it their vocation not to blacken, but to be-grey and to tone down, to uncolour all vivid tints, and crumble down all beautiful forms. Who would you trust with father's biography?"

"I would trust no one but mother," said Margaret; "and she certainly could never write it."

"And yet," said Monica, "I feel sure that if you came here years after father had left this parish, you would find a legend of a good, kind, holy, beneficent presence, and sundry of his quaint little sayings floating in people's memories, and in the main a true memory of what he had been and done."

"Christianity is, after all, a history," said Austin gravely.

"But father says it is a history which proves its own Divineness, by being so different from any other," acknowledged Monica, candidly weakening her line of defence. "The contrast on one hand between the Gospels and the apocryphal gospels, and between the Epistles and the earliest ecclesiastical epistles nearly contemporary, he thinks among the strongest foundations of the faith."

"Yet," said Austin, "if there were no Church history after the Acts of the Apostles, what would become of the very end and meaning of the Acts of the Apostles?"

What is the use of proving the purity of the fountain, by showing that nothing but turbid and brackish water has flowed from it?"

Monica sighed. "I know!" she said, "I have thought of that, too. But as far as I am concerned, we are getting out of the depth of the Long Parliament into that of the *Causeries du Lundi*. I shall have a talk with my father about it."

"I saw father pass the window this moment," said Walter. "Let us ask him to come in."

"Privilege! privilege! gentlemen," said Eustace, "the constitution is threatened."

But the glass door had been already opened, and Maurice ushered in triumph up the wooden stairs into the room.

"An unconstitutional step, I understand," he said, with his dry quiet smile. "Representative institutions on their trial, and actually in this instance a failure?"

"Father," said Monica, still trembling with eagerness, "Eustace says there is no such thing as history."

"No such thing as history how long ago?"

"No such thing as a true history of yesterday, or to-day," replied Monica, "and therefore none at all."

"Qualifications seem to me needed. Is it not true that yesterday I preached the Wednesday evening's sermon, and——"

"The bare fact, yes," said Eustace.

"But not true that May reported to your mother that I pronounced Dot immortal; that being only May's version of a rather paradoxical statement that it was easier to prove patient and faithful dogs and horses immortal than to prove a human immortality in which the brutal human beings who misused them would not be punished."

"It does seem sometimes, father," said Eustace, "that the professedly invented speeches of the old

Roman histories are as good history as the true reports we profess to get."

"You mean," said Maurice, "that a clever, vivid, candid, historical novel may often give us truer pictures of the past than a party-history?"

"Or what is worse," said Monica, "a dull, indiscriminating mash of contradictory reports professing to be impartial. Anything is better than a sceptical, cynical splitting-up or powdering down of characters and events, until no one worth revering, and nothing worth doing is left."

"You think," said Maurice, "that the very worst kind of history is that which starts with disbelieving in the probability of nobleness, which would make, for instance, Simon Magus, or poor sleepy Eutychus, the normal types of early Christians, and proceed subtly to analyze St. Peter, and patronisingly to stultify St. Paul down to that level?"

"I mean, that is, I partly mean," said Monica flushing, "that it seems as if our life were no better than a bit of natural history, if we are to lose the certainty of all the good and great lives before us, and the possibility of growing a little bit like them." She was sitting at her father's feet, gazing up into his face.

Mr. Leigh stroked back the hair from the eager face, as he used to do when she was a child.

"I think Eustace will concede you the eleventh of the Hebrews, my hero-worshipper, and a little continuation," he said. "And," he added very tenderly, "One Name too high even for that."

There was a little pause.

"Never fear! We do believe in history, all of us," he continued. "We all have our continuations of the eleventh of the Hebrews. I have no doubt Eustace has his own. And I have not the slightest doubt," he added with a deepening voice, "you every one of you do

trust and determine to live your own fragment of the continuation, although, so probably, almost certainly, only to be among those of whom 'the time would fail me to tell.'"

His eyes rested on Walter as he spoke.

"Walter has his Hawkins, and Drake, and Raleigh, and Effingham, I am sure. And probably, not omitted among them, our namesake, old blind Amyas Leigh."

Walter's eye kindled, and then sank.

"I always did think novels of that kind the best history," he confessed. "Isn't it better to see some of the people giants and others dwarfs; some too black, and others too dazzlingly white, than to see nothing but a series of anatomical drawings, or a statement like a balance of accounts?"

"Balance of accounts is just what I think we don't succeed in," said Mr. Leigh quietly, "and scarcely shall, here."

"But, oh, father," said Monica, emboldened to air her own perplexities by the certainty of encountering a conviction firmer than her own, "the waste of power! the heroes fighting against each other, never understanding each other, maligning each other! Sir Thomas More, and Rogers, and Bradford, and all the martyrs, on so many sides."

"Is even that all waste of power?" he said. "What if the very fighting strengthens muscle for better use hereafter?"

"You have entered on an interminable subject," he resumed. "But I confess that my wonder is not at the uncertainties, but the certainties. The whole process of sifting in history and literature seems to me wonderful, as wonderful as any of the wonders of natural selection. How is it that the fittest survives as much as it does? *the best books* and the noblest lives? When first a *good book* appears, it comes up amidst a crowd, pro-

nounced by most readers as interesting or uninteresting, and by many critics more artistic; but in a few years nine-tenths of this meritorious crowd have sunk, never to rise again, and the good book is quietly floating, circulated far and wide, translated, taken to the hearts of thousands. What makes Dante and Shakespeare live? None of their contemporaries thought enough of them to give us the precious details of their lives, so easy for them to have told, and for which we hunt libraries to re-discover one fragment. What makes us know Sir Thomas More, and Latimer, and Bradford enough to revere them? Depend upon it, the fact that we have any history, such as we have, amidst the apparently insurmountable difficulties attending it, is the best answer to historical scepticism. Forgeries that last centuries, have to be abandoned at last, making what ruin they may in what was built on them. Falsehoods have to die, whether about the solar system or about ecclesiastical systems; or about any calumniated man, or woman, or child. My children! never believe the old lie of Mephistopheles, that we sprang from eternal night and chaos, and to night and chaos we return. Night is only shadow, and chaos is only a beginning. Light is eternal, and from eternal Light we sprang. Now, children, *now*, even while we are *becoming* out of Chaos, and groping in our dim-sightedness, in Him is no darkness at all. And the ages are slowly working out His siftings. Grains of this purged floor of His garner reach us even here. And in a little while, some morning—who knows in how brief a time, or on what morning?—we may be altogether in the light. And, then, Monica," he concluded, "we shall know what history is, and be glad, I think, of any honest glimpses we saw of it here below."

But Monica's heart was too full to answer.

"See," he rejoined, "how necessary it is to shut out

the parsons from the House of Commons. They would be always breaking into sermons. And it would take a little while at least before the laity would rise to the perception that they had the privilege of reply."

He left the room, but as he was leaving he turned back and said quietly—

"Perhaps I had better tell you now, children, that you must not visit the people just now without telling me. An epidemic has broken out, and the doctors cannot quite make up their minds yet how serious it is, or how far it is infectious."

"An epidemic!" said Walter, when his father had finally left, with a long whistle; "that means something grave. Father never uses a long word where a short one will do."

"Or an indefinite one when he can get a definite," said Austin.

"I wish I were not going away to-morrow!" said Walter.

"And I cannot help wishing we were all going, as it was meant we should last week," said Margaret. "Father looks as if he wanted a holiday. It has been a hard winter, and of course *he* will go everywhere whatever happens."

CHAPTER XV.

THE epidemic proved to be Asiatic cholera, imported, it was said, by a merchant ship from the Levant lying for repairs in the docks, and fostered by impurity in the drinking water supplied to the neighbourhood.

Like the greater part of London, Maurice Leigh's parish consisted of a nucleus of an ancient country town, with good old houses now divided into tenements, around which had clustered, at their own sweet will, knots of cottages, low and ill-drained, and sometimes picturesque as those in old villages, or in the outlying regions of provincial towns, and with the healing breath of green fields, substituted by tall warehouses, factories, docks, and many storeyed new houses. In these alleys, often retaining, as if in parody, the name of the green banks and nightingale copses which had once breathed the healing breath of nature over their human stupidities, fevers and epidemics of all kinds found a well-prepared soil.

The land was often held on short leases in small lots, by landlords who had no interest but to make the highest weekly rent out of it. Maurice had often said that nothing save the fiery sword of an angel of pestilence would consume them into wholesomeness.

And at last the pestilence had come.

The fiery sword of outraged law swept over the whole

district, and the long wail of the dying and the mourning woke up the spacious homes and streets and palaces of the quarter of the great city which has a voice, to the wants of the mute multitudes, who have hands, indeed, to toil, but whose voice through so many ages history has chiefly heard in moans, or in momentary cries of rage, like those of a ravening beast.

The sympathy of the wealthy quarters awoke, recognising the human brotherhood; and their terror also awoke, for the pestilence itself preached fraternity and equality in its own grim way.

The terrible disease itself reached many a home supposed to be well-guarded against such attacks, and the unity of the great city asserted itself with reckless distinctness.

It was decided that the family at the river-side parsonage should for the time be dispersed among the various relations, and that Maurice and Grace alone should remain.

There were to be no leave-takings; everything was to be taken quite simply and naturally.

They might collect again in two or three weeks, and meantime every one was to help the rest to make as little of the trial as possible.

Walter had already sailed. Eustace, Margaret, and the twins were to go to Lady Katharine at Combe; Austin, Monica, and Baby May to Mrs. O'Brien.

The family were gathered in the old room of the Long Parliament once more. Dorothy and Dora, and even Baby May, were present.

They had all been busy packing and cleaning all day. A journey of any kind was always something of a solemnity in the family, comparative poverty having kept keen for them the edge of all family pleasures. And *yet on this occasion* there was a disposition among them *all to make as light of the change as possible.*

Only Baby May was uncontrollably solemn and tearful. Sitting on Margaret's knee, she moaned—

“Do you really think Miss Lavinia and Dot will understand each other, Margaret? Miss Lavinia never had a dog. And Aunt O'Brien has so many! It does seem a pity things—I mean dogs—are so unequally divided.”

“Miss Lavinia understands every one,” said Margaret.

“So Aunt Winifred says,” was the doubtful reply; “but even Aunt Winifred never had a dog of her own. Aunt O'Brien had always so many. It is a great pity Aunt O'Brien does not think Dot would get on with her Pomeranians. Dot always gets on with every one. He would not hurt a cat. But I think he would be more unhappy here without me, and with papa and mamma so busy, now that Fan is married. For I heard our Emma say once, when I was comforting him for not going a walk, that he was ‘only a dog, after all!’ as if one dog were the same as another, or as if ‘dog’ were a term of reproach. Just think, *only* a dog! It would never do to trust Emma with Dot,” and May's eyes filled at the depth of the misappreciation, and the possible wounding of Dot's feelings involved.

“Why, May, you talk as if we were going to emigrate,” said Eustace, with an uneasy gaiety. “In a week or two Dot will be dancing about you again in a frantic war-dance of welcome.”

May's face brightened for a moment. But then she said, shaking her head—

“It does seem a little like emigrating, I think. I have felt it so all day. Or, even more, I think, like being transported, don't you? Papa, and mamma, and Dot left behind, and not to wish any one good-bye? And no one wanting to go. And no one knowing when we are coming back.”

“Don't, May, don't!” interposed Monica, feeling that *the child was only uttering what all felt, and no one else*

dared to say. And then suddenly going to the window, and after a moment of silence coming back, she continued, "Why should May be the only one to speak the truth? Why should we all be like the type of an inarticulate English school-boy, suppressing all show of feeling, pretending that it is nothing, when we all know nothing so terrible ever happened to us in our lives? when we know it is like leaving our father and mother to stand before some dreadful battery, and being driven away ourselves to be safe and comfortable, and not to know from hour to hour what is happening to them, and not to be able to help them in the least?"

"Don't rail too fiercely against the British school-boy," said Eustace. "You know father hates false heroes as much as any one. He can't bear that clergymen and missionaries should be called heroes and martyrs for doing what doctors and soldiers and people in the Civil Service are expected to do as a matter of course."

"We *are* helping them by doing what they think it right for us to do," said Margaret, "and by lifting off from them the load of anxiety about us."

"I wish they did *not* think it right," said Austin. "Father calls us all as a family the Anglican clerical unit. And I think, as a unit, we ought to be allowed to share all the risks."

"But it is not sharing risks; it is adding to their risks and burdens if we stay," said Margaret, "just as if the children of a general were to insist on following their father to a siege."

"I wish it *were* like being besieged!" said Monica, "and then there would be no choice."

"There *is* no choice for us," concluded Margaret, "so I suppose to object is really murmuring. We must *make* it as easy as we can for them."

"*Oh, Margaret, don't we? Haven't I tried?*" replied *nica*. And then, with one of her rapid bursts of con-

CHAPTER XVI.

THE family prayers the next morning were scarcely perceptibly different from those of other days. It was so habitually Maurice Leigh's conviction that the whole of life was a warfare, and that every day has the freshness and solemnity of a new life in itself.

Only the children observed it as a sanction and a coincidence that he used the Collect they had chosen in common. "Ready both in body and soul"—body and soul united, not conflicting, offered up together "cheerfully," not as conscripts or victims, but as volunteers; to "accomplish," not attempt feebly and desultorily, but carry out thoroughly, not what we think best, but "what Thou wouldest have done."

There were few tears at the parting,—at least, until it was over. Even May limited herself to one long sob at the last refusal to allow Dot to accompany her. It was so hard for dogs, she sighed, because you could not explain anything to them, and their part in the sacrifice was so entirely that of victims unsustained by any voluntary heroism.

Mother Margaret started early in the morning with her party, for their journey to the west, assisted, as to concealment of emotion, by the little bustle of the early departure.

The carriage which was to take Monica and May to *Mrs. O'Brien's* brought Winifred in to her work in the *hospital*.

Winifred observed Monica's pale face and compressed lips as she took from her the bag containing her compact hospital wardrobe. And the first minute she was alone she said—

“Poor child! yours is the hardest part of the sacrifice now; the old passive, waiting, woman's part. But you will find it prepares for other things.”

“It would be a little easier if we could *walk* away until we were tired to death,” said Monica, “with our bundles on our shoulders. It *is* a little worse to be carried away from where one's whole heart is, in a thing with C springs and soft cushions, with two men-servants with nothing to do but to take care one does nothing.”

“I think it is,” said Winifred, smiling and kissing the frowning brow. “Don't grudge me the exchange, Monica!”

“Has Aunt Winifred, then, gone through something like this?” thought Monica, wakening up to the perception that being entirely grown up, and a little more, is not after all a fixed state, but an epoch reached through struggles and growths and prunings just like her own.

The three who were to remain—the father, and mother, and Winifred—stood on the threshold watching the departing children, and then turned back to the empty house.

“It makes me think, Winifred, of the old birthday when I brought you in to see Grace for the first time,” said Maurice, “and we three spent the day together.”

“It feels to me in some way like a new beginning,” replied Winifred, “I scarcely know how; a strange kind of solemnity and newness, as if some new life were beginning, like a birthday of something better than we have.”

I suppose it is that to me. I have so

longed really to work, not only to be paymaster, and secretary, or to do other people's work."

There was little time, however, for going over the past.

The three were to have early dinner together, and then Winifred was to establish herself permanently in her hospital quarters.

The days were full to the brim of work. The parsonage was a supplementary hospital from which precautionary remedies were given out, and where Grace was always ready for consultation or visits; her face in itself as good as a tranquillising draught, and her clear calm voice like a breath of fresh air.

Maurice was particularly careful that none of the ordinary parish work should be neglected; that everything in the schools, and in the working men's reading-room, and in the church services should as far as possible have its quiet every-day look.

Yet there were moments at their quiet meals together, penetrated with a sense of rest, allowable and satisfying rest, such as Grace had scarcely known for years. With all her motherly care, and wisdom, and tenderness, she had always so remained primarily the wife, that anything which made her own and her husband's life once more complete only in each other, brought to her for the time a sense of youth and quiet joy for which she almost re-proached herself.

As they stood together one evening, after early tea in the summer-parlour, her hand crept into Maurice's, and she said—

"What a home it has been! What a home it is! How untrue it seems to talk of our making sacrifices! Together, nothing is a sacrifice, or can be. The great love flows in and fills up everything. We cannot miss *anything* or any one immensely, Maurice. Together *there seems no shipwreck* possible for us."

"And God has given us to be together," he said.

They never thought of anything else being possible. Were they not in the same boat, in the same storm, hand-in-hand, what smote one sure to smite the other, not two existences leaning one on another, like a vine on an elm, but one intertwined life, inseparably blended from the roots, so that no one could tell which branch belonged to one or which to the other?

Old friends gathered around them. Mrs. Anderson had long been parish-nurse; Fan, her husband having gone again to sea, insisted on taking her old place, that the new maid, who was nervous and therefore liable to attack, might be sent home for a time to her friends in the country.

The small tradesmen and their wives came to their aid with gifts of groceries and meat; and the fruit of the slow patient years of service ripened now, with this "sudden frost," in the general sense of trust which made every one gather round Maurice and Grace.

Life cannot be spent in a triumphal progress, and is seldom spent without some necessity for retracing false steps. Maurice and Grace's experience, like other people's, had been gained only by degrees. They had affronted not a few prejudices, and had met with their fair share of suspicion and opposition, from the sturdy conservatism of bureaucratic prejudice, which suspected all improvements because they were new, and from the obstinacy of democratic prejudice, which suspected all improvements suggested from above.

But the life had quietly made its way, and now that a crisis had come, every one rallied round Maurice simply because he belonged to everybody, to no section in particular of society or of opinion; servant to the whole, and accountable to no one, because servant supremely of the Master to whom all have to give account.

Free-born vestrymen who had opposed him in ear-

days, having "no idea of being lorded over by any young man because he had been at the University," came to him now for consultation. And for the moment he naturally became the leader, just because he had no wish to lead, but only to help.

It was no new thing for him to be working with good men and women of all denominations in his parish, not in rhetorical demonstrations, but in all possible modes of real mutual help.

He had a way of recognising facts, in these matters, which greatly facilitates such intercourse.

He had always rejoiced in belonging to a church which was not blinded to history by claims of infallibility in the past, nor excluded from Christian sympathy by claims of supremacy in the present, which has no more pledged herself to limit the grace of God, than to stay His stars.

Whoever was in the wrong at the commencement of the divisions, he had always acknowledged that the great bodies of English Dissenters have their own historical titles, their calendar of holy men and women, "blessed" certainly, if not canonised; their records of victories over the common enemy of sin and ignorance. And with the priests of the Church of Rome, one a Belgian, and one of Irish peasant origin, who worked among the large Irish population of his parish, he exchanged such friendly courtesies as are possible with a Church which claims to be in sole possession of Christendom.

To him, therefore, the solemn moments at the death-bed now becoming so terribly frequent, were no moments of strained spasmodic effort on either side to compensate for the want of intercourse in life.

The eyes which now looked into his, with the wistful entreaty and inquiry which can put up with no half-truths, —had often before met his in hearty smiling greeting; *the men had talked to him of their family or personal*

difficulties and perplexities, their work and their want of work ; the women had told him about their unmanageable boys, or their tempted girls ; the little children had laughed at his quaint stories, and delighted in his parables ; and, therefore, these sacred last words between them were as natural and simple as those before.

They knew his voice, literally and spiritually, and they knew that its tones were as true now when they thrilled with promises on which life seemed to hang, as in the old friendly greetings in home and street.

All this confidence and affection made the strain upon him very constant. Grace, though not ordained (like the pastor's wife in one of the Syrian churches), took her full share in the ministrations to the sick, and was usually present when the Sacrament was administered, making it thus as much as possible a Holy Communion with the disciples, as well as with the Divine Master. But her chief work was so to arrange matters at home, that the home should still be a resting-place for her husband.

The church was very full at all the services, although Maurice, contrary to his custom, occasionally preached old sermons, as Winifred reminded him one Sunday evening when she had detected it.

"I thought you never committed plagiarisms from yourself," she said. "I thought you told me you *could* not preach over an old sermon."

"Just now I can," he said, "that is, with modifications. I think it best to lift myself and the people as much as I can out of this temporary storm of terror, and morbid anxiety about soul and body, to the old unchangeable realities, to some quiet story of healing in Galilee, and of the forgiveness which is doubly healing ; to the Death and Immortality as near us always as now, to the Love as near us now as always."

"But it all combines to confirm that strange feeling

which has taken possession of me," said Winifred; "that strange kind of solemn gladness, as if this were a new beginning of life."

"Have we not seen life begin lately with not a few?" he said. "Have we not heard one say, 'Death is only going from one room to another?' And another to whom I said, 'It is the roughest part of the way, but it is the last,' 'Not rough—not rough. He makes it smooth to me!'"

"I did not mean a beginning in that sense," she said, with an anxious glance in his face. "Maurice, the doctors say they think the virulence of the disease is diminishing. You and Grace must take next Monday afternoon together in the country. You both want it, for the sake of every one. And I will take a holiday by representing Grace at the Parsonage."

"Not next Monday," he said, "there is scarcely improvement enough yet. And why should you shrink from thinking of the beginning *in that sense*? Death itself is only one among many beginnings; walking in newness of life."

"I do not shrink, *for myself!*" she replied.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE next week did bring steady diminution in the number and virulence of the cases.

But it also brought a personal anxiety and an increase of toil to Grace and Maurice in the illness of their life-long old friend Lavinia Lovel.

From the first there was scarcely a chance that the frail, worn-out constitution would carry on a successful struggle with the disease.

The struggle was indeed neither violent nor long. A few days and nights of bodily restlessness, and of perfect inward peace, and the placid spirit floated into what had so long seemed its element, and the threads of long-past memory which the feeble hands had held, dropped apart and lost their meaning in this world. The little room, with its old-fashioned pictures and furniture, like the living petals around a life, became a lifeless museum of antiquities; except for the few treasures of which Grace had the translation, and which she sacredly guarded.

Yet that last struggle and quiet victory were not without their living trophy.

"Poor dear soul!" sobbed Mrs. Mowlem, awakened at last to the Ten Commandments, and bringing every scrap of the little household property faithfully to Grace. "I thought it was the tea and sugar her and *master* were so particular about. And now I see it was

the Commandments, and me! It was *me* she couldn't bear to find wanting. And please God she shan't."

It was on the Monday morning Grace told this to Maurice.

He did not smile, his lip quivered.

"Grace," he said, "we have tried hard to wake up that poor confused soul, and bring her round. And now that she seems coming, it gives me a kind of awe, like a glimpse of the great harvest before the time."

Lavinia Lovel was to be buried early that afternoon beside her sister, and near Mr. Leigh; and Maurice was resolved to fulfil an old promise by reading the words of undying hope over the grave.

The dreadful cloud was perceptibly lightening over the parish. Grace and he would in this way have a breath of country air, and a few days of rest, without the sense of deserting his post, which would have made any other change just then no repose to him.

The railway journey to the cemetery among the fields was over.

The "*Voice from heaven*" was indeed heard, it seemed to them as it has to so many, saying, "*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord,*" and in so saying, opening the heaven it announces, and Grace and Maurice Leigh stood sole mourners beside the grave.

They turned aside to read those same words on the pedestal of the simple cross which marked where Mr. Leigh had been laid.

"How long it seems since we laid him there!" Maurice said; "and yet how short the twenty years have seemed as they passed! And certainly not longer to him than to us."

"If we could only know just once a year exactly what they are doing that very hour!" said Grace. "I who *used to be with him* from morning till night, and know *change in his countenance*, not to have known

about one definite hour for twenty years ! It is terribly complete, that silence."

"Does it seem so to you?" he said, as if in surprise. "They are *themselves*; everything that burdened them, burdened their highest and truest selves, dropped off and dissolved. And they are with Christ. Sometimes I feel as if we knew more what they are thinking about, and even doing, than we know of the life of any one except those who are with us altogether and all through, as we are with each other. We are so certain they are not misunderstanding, or misinformed, or forgetting, being with Him Who never misunderstands or forsakes or forgets. We are so certain they are satisfied, giving thanks, seeing the meaning of things, looking back over all the way we were led together, without perplexity."

"Yes," she said, "but I should like so infinitely just that one hour now and then to be sure of."

"Like the lovers in old times, Grace?" he said; "to be sure they were looking at one star together at one hour? Are we not sure we are looking at our Day-star together? Does not that bring us very near?"

"But the little things, the little every-day things!" she said.

"Yes," he said, drawing her hand into both his as they walked away. "The best things are yet to come, even for us, for us all."

"It is good to live in cities," she said, "there are so many to be helped. But I cannot like being buried in cities like this, with streets, and rows, and numbers."

"Will it seem very strange to you?" he said. "I don't dislike it to be so. It seems like soldiers just laid down in the trenches where they fell, and waiting for the roll-call."

"It is strange," he continued, "how naturally death has hitherto always come to us, just taking those whose work was obviously done, rank by rank; nothing to per-

plex. Not one of the children touched; scarcely one close to us of our own generation; just the quiet stream passing from the visible into the invisible by the natural flow of time. It has been very different from that, in the parish lately."

The thought of the children led them into discourse on that fertile subject.

"It takes some time," he said, "to learn how really we each and all of us have to live our own life, bear our own burden, fight our own battle. It seems so natural, at first, that the ground we have gained should be gained for our children also; that it is difficult not to be a little indignant with them for feeling after the truths we seem to have found once for all, not to imagine they are *pretending* their conflicts, when to us the difficulties they are perplexed with have ceased to be difficulties. It seems as unreasonable as if they should set themselves against the Copernican system, or the undulatory theory of sound and light. It takes long to learn practically that spiritual truth has really different aspects, without sin, simply from our different characters and necessities, and different points of view; and that even the differences which spring from faults of character and that ought *not* to be, have to be corrected slowly like the character itself. We talk philosophically about the pendulum vibrating, or truth advancing in a spiral. But when the pendulum begins to swing back from our own point of the vibration, it is difficult not to feel as if the sun were standing still, or the whole machinery being reversed."

"The vibrations seem particularly extreme, too, in these days," said Grace.

"It seems sometimes," he replied, "as if we were standing on the old Cornish coast, or the shores of the *Atlantic*, not of any quiet little inland sea; each long *sweep of the receding wave* might easily be mistaken for

an ebb. But though the wave sweeps back for a century, Grace, never let us believe in an ebb of the tide of life and light! It is always 'conquering and to conquer.'"

They spoke about the mediævalisms of Austin, to whom the past was as a divine progenitor to be adored, and the liberalisms of Eustace, who was disposed to patronise the past as a baby in swaddling-clothes.

"And both," said Maurice, "so right and so wrong; the past being, in truth, to us both as a childhood from which we are to grow into manhood, and as a father whom, unless we reverence, and learn what he has to teach, we shall never grow into manhood."

"But, Maurice, the children have all that. They do want to *learn*. They do like to *look up*; Austin to the past, Eustace to the heroes in the present. They are above the vulgar ignorance of the *nil admirari*, and they delight to work. They have gained the habit of steady thorough work, which poor Harry never gained, and which you think so few gain after youth."

"Except with the help of St. Francis' blessed bride Poverty," he replied, smiling, "the stern professor to whose teaching Providence commits so large a portion of us. Our children also have a chance of their share of that wholesome discipline."

"You wish Monica to be a governess to help Austin?"

"Certainly! She must spin and weave, and if she doesn't work at some tangible loom she will spin cobwebs."

"The reactionary vibration of the twins turns in a more secular direction," said Grace. "I found them the other day seriously advocating the importance of regarding social distinctions rather more than they think we do."

"Dorothy does look rather like a born Saxon queen."

he said, "with her stately carriage, and her straight calm beautiful brow. And Dora has made a lady's bower out of her attic, by means of her ivy and creeping jennies, and her lovebirds. She looks like a fairy princess in it."

"Yet her luxuries are all beauty, not vulgar costliness; and she tries to make her Sunday-school children do the same," said Grace. "And Dorothy's queenliness is all graciousness to the poor, or to any one she can serve."

"Grace," he said, "is it true? Can anything so blessed be true? Has it indeed been given us to stamp on the children's very souls the lesson that the Christians before they were called Christians were called *learners*, *disciples*, and that after they are called Christians they can do nothing higher and more heavenly than *serve*? Can we hope that the twenty years among the toiling and needy have done that?"

"Oh, love! how can we tell? The happy twenty years! How can we hope too much from them and from God in every hour of them? But for this time of terror how could we have seen even as much of the harvest as we have?"

"But Gracie," he resumed, recurring to what she had said about her brother, "don't despair of Harry. I begin to think necessity will do for him what perhaps even Winifred never could have done. Grace, let us, too, be learners and believers to the very end. When I get back I mean my first sermon to be on the heresy of unbelief in Christ as the Good Shepherd, the Shepherd of each one of us, every day."

They had wandered into a country lane, which was bordered by a hedgerow overshadowed with trees. A robin was tranquilly singing by the way-side, letting his quiet songs drop one by one, just as here and there a *brown leaf* dropped from the branches.

The air was very still, and the sound of a cow crunching the grass in the field inside the hedge was music to their city ears.

"Do you remember," said Grace, "in the parable you made for Winifred about the Five Worlds, your saying that those who once went out through the door into the world of want had little time afterwards for looking through the windows into the worlds of history, and of art, and science? You said that was to be left for the Fifth World, of whose door only One Hand had the keys. Yet nevertheless we have found time for many a glimpse, and many a long look through those windows, Maurice."

"I do believe we see more of many things in glimpses than by ceaseless looking," he said. "I remember Emerson saying that the 'shows of day, the dewy morning, rainbows,' mountains, orchards in blossom, stars, shadows, and still water, and the like, if too eagerly hunted, become shows merely, and mock us with their unreality. Go out of the house," he says, "to see the moon, and it is mere tinsel; it will not please us as when its light shines on our necessary journey. The beauty that glimmers in the yellow afternoons of October" (such as this, Grace), "who ever could clutch it? Go forth to find it, and it is gone. It is only a mirage as you look through the windows of the diligence."

"I remember too," she said, looking up in his face, "and don't *you* remember? the first October afternoon you read that to me? And don't I remember the other bit in the Orations further on about the formalist preacher, 'He had no word for intimating that he had laughed or wept, was married or in love. The true preacher can always be known by this, that *he deals out to the people his life—life passed through the fire of thought.*' Haven't I been remembering that all these years?"

And so these companions and lovers of twenty years, found endless variety in each other, and a perpetual spring of freshness in all they did and thought and felt together. Side by side, the warfare of life seemed dissolved in the innermost harmony of love and peace. The service of life was as a perpetual marriage feast, and the journey of life, day by day, began like an Easter, and went on like a Whitsuntide, and ended with a benediction of rest, as if night were a divine hand laid softly on them in blessing.

They came back to the silent and empty house. But together no desert would have seemed silent or empty to them. And there were letters from the children to greet them, bright and characteristic.

From Margaret:—

“Aunt Katharine does say very strange things. Yesterday the curate, Mr. Victor Felix Hunter, dined with us, and was certainly very attentive to Dorothy. This morning Aunt Katharine said, ‘Now let us understand each other once for all. I will not have any nonsense about curates. Your father is early Christian enough, and Quixotic enough for anything’ (you know, or *don't* you know? Aunt Katharine thinks father better than any one). ‘And I have no doubt he has taught you that a hundred a year is an ample maintenance for his beloved “clerical unit,” that the bracing air of poverty ought to be as little dreaded by Anglicans as by Romans, or something of that sublime kind. It may be a bracing air for those who choose it. But it is a very irritating air for their relations, who don't choose it, and have to see that there is something besides air, however bracing, for the romantic people to live on. Besides,’ she said, ‘my dear, of all the types of curate I have seen—and my experience has been large—this is about the most *objectionable*, a young man who indulges in “honest doubts,” and does not seem to find it at all uncomf

able. If he doubts the Prayer-Book or the Bible, let him break stones, or mend shoes, or do something he has no doubt about; or at least let him be miserable. Whatever "honest doubts" are good for, they are not good to preach, and whatever honest doubters are good for, they are not good to marry. Who knows but they may take to doubting the Tēn Commandments? So my dear, take care of Dorothy.'

"But I do not think Dorothy has a thought of anything of this kind. They are such children; only, Dorothy looks so queenly, every one thinks her older than she is."

And Dorothy and Dora wrote in ecstasies about the troops of relations they had discovered; they had had no idea what a delight it would be to come into a new world of cousins, Danescobes, and Godefrois, and Fyford, living in old manor-houses and new mansions and parsonages, and all so delighted to welcome them, and all speaking of father with such honour.

And the room, the *space* indoors and out, the spaciousness of the world generally, the freedom! everything in crowds, cousins, and servants, and ponies, and trees, and flowers. One of their cousins had wondered if one day Mr. and Mrs. Leigh would leave that smoky parish to which they had so generously devoted their best days, and settle at last in that neighbourhood and reap the harvest of rest and luxury they had so well earned. No, Dora remembered, it was not a cousin who said that, it was a lady who told them their father had once known her as Minna Denison, a pretty old lady, no, not old, middle-aged, and only looking so much older than mother, because she dressed in the last juvenile fashions.

Maurice and Grace smiled a little.

"My love," he said, "that is not exactly the kind of reaping that comes out of sowing like ours. At least I hope not. You remember Robertson's sermon on

sowing and reaping. We have hoped to reap *in kind*, Gracie; and I don't think we have been altogether disappointed."

Eustace's letter made them a little more anxious at first.

"Aunt Katharine is really hard on the curate," he wrote. "He has really only a few very mild little difficulties. But perhaps he airs them rather too much."

But at the close came a reassuring postscript: "I have been telling him he should take a turn at an East-End parish like ours. If it could be under father, I believe it would do him all the good in the world; he would not succeed in startling my father, which is perhaps a temptation to him. I think he has indulged a little too freely in startling his mother and sisters. Curiously, his name is Felix Hunter, one of the rich relations who used to be a trial to our grandfather. And that helps, to make Aunt Katharine angry. She is indignant with the pretension of the family having made the 'Felix,' into a permanent prefix, as if it were an estate, or an old family name. Aunt Katharine does enjoy that privilege of rank which Austin says St. Melania gloried in, having 'a great name to set like a dog or a falcon at your enemies;'—Aunt Katharine's enemies being all pretenders."

Monica wrote:—

"How thankful I am our vocations have been among the ordinary working men and women's vocations, made so much clearer by their being connected with the daily bread! How thankful for the dear busy home, where nothing was exactly in overflow but love; where we had the joy of helping each other by giving something of our very own, or of our very selves, something we really cared for! How glad we shall be to get back to the dear bit of wilderness again, our own 'Thornaby waste,' to 'stub.' Poor dear Aunt Winifred! And yet *this is not* really altogether a dreadful dreary Earthly

Paradise for us, for I have May to teach, and I have been painting hard, and after all, I know it is folly talking in this way; God will never let us sink into a slough of luxurious despond; and Aunt O'Brien has really had 'nerves,' and that must be an occupation to any one, and she is so very kind. Only, I think I know now the kind of places where all the wretched hymns were written, which you both hate, the hymns which father says are only murmurs set to moans, the hymns which want to sing themselves to everlasting bliss, and to fly away from our places to heaven, without being invited; which rhyme dreary and weary, and are ready to resign their dearest idols before they are asked; which make earth a place where one has nothing to do but to long for heaven, and heaven a place where one would have nothing to do, it seems to me, but to wish ourself back again on earth, just for a touch of its bracing frost, or a bit of its honest tiring work.

"How happy, how full, how real you, dearest father and mother,—you and God,—have made our lives!

"How I long to be at home, with the dear worn books and carpets, and mended chairs, and amateur easels, and contrivances of all kinds!

"But, of course, I only feel this because this is not home, and not with you. We are really happy here, and at all events are not adding to those wretched hymns."

And Austin wrote very briefly to Grace:—

"I have a thousand things to talk of at my next *Causerie du Lundi*. I think I might come and help my father now. There must be some things I might do for him. I know he must be overworked, and there seems nothing in the world so well worth doing as anything to help him, if one could."

Grace and Maurice strolled down into the Long Room, and looked at the mended chairs, and the worn *Shakespeare* and *Homer*, the *Fairy Tales* with the *albums*

cious mystery of no title-page, the various books in all kinds of amateur bindings, and the easel Eustace had made for Monica, and the model yacht constructed by Walter for May, and the bed he had made for Dot, and all the traces of self-help and loving plans for each other in which the queer old room abounded, and which made the house so homelike.

"There is only one thing I grudge the children," Maurice said, as they left the room. "I think we must not concede all the *Causeries du Lundi* to them, Grace, in the future. We must take our turn, at least for ourselves."

And at the evening meal he said—

"Dear, do you remember how you used to like to think breakfast and supper were the two meals mentioned in the Gospels? that Holy Supper which was the last, and the first of so many; and the Breakfast prepared by Himself, with the Risen Lord—His morning welcome to the disciples on the shores of the lake of Galilee. Ah! that welcome will come for us also, Grace, one day."

"How much better, richer, fuller, the life He has given us has been," she replied, "than even we then ventured to dream."

"Are not all divine fulfilments in that good measure," he said, "pressed down, heaped together, and running over?"

"Only sometimes I have a dim terror," she said. "There is so much about that *other cup*, also to be drunk to the last drop. So many have to drink it. Indeed, in one way or another, I suppose all."

"Could we not, would we not, drain any cup of bitterness, *together*?" he said.

Her face cleared.

"And what cup could be given," he concluded, "that *we could not take together*; that *we would not*?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE next day Maurice did not seem as well as usual. They thought the October ramble had given him a chill; and it was just with a tinge of anxiety that Grace watched him from the door, on the following morning, on his round of visits.

"I will come back early," he said. "We will give ourselves a holiday afternoon, and do some window gardening in the summer parlour. The old house must be made festive for those luxurious young persons when they come back from their various summer palaces. In a few days we will write and summon them home."

When the bell rang a little before their early dinner hour, Grace concluded it was Maurice arrived a little earlier than usual, and ran down to open the door to him.

Mrs. Anderson met her, with a voice whose determined cheerfulness grated on her ear with a suggestion of falsetto.

"Mr. Leigh is not so well," she said. "Only something slight, he hopes, but just to be attended to immediately."

Grace was dressed and following Mrs. Anderson in a minute.

On her way she had an impression that the people in the shops looked at her compassionately, as if they *knew more than she did.*

Maurice was laid on a bed in the room where he had gone to comfort a bereaved mother, and had been seized with illness.

At the door was a cab.

"I only waited for your consent," he said, when Grace came in. "I wish to be taken to the hospital. I think it is right for the people, and I think it may be best really for me."

A shiver of repugnance and terror passed through her. Maurice ill, and not in their home, with strangers around to share the nursing!

He saw the conflict in her eyes as she bent over him.

"They have all had to bear it!" he said. "They believed us, and went because we told them; and we have thrown in our own lot with them, my love, for twenty years."

"It is quite right," she said, trying to keep her lips from quivering so that she could not speak. "I may go with you, may I not?" she added, like one who felt that her will was to be altogether laid down, like a little child's.

A few minutes afterwards Winifred met them at the hospital, and Maurice was laid on a bed in her ward.

"Not altogether among strangers, Grace!" he said.

The doctor came, and looked grave.

For a moment they were alone together, while Winifred went to receive her medical orders.

"Grace, did we not say we could, we *would*, drink any cup *together*? Let us drink this together, not apart. Let us *will* to drink it, love. Not our will, but Thine."

But she could not answer yet, at least not in words.

There was little time or opportunity for farewells or for preparations. When is there?

Once they heard him murmur, when they had hoped he was asleep—

"Among my people, as I have lived—not apart from *them*! *Master*, it is well!"

And to Winifred, with a smile—

“You see it *is* a beginning ;—one of the beginnings ; in newness of life.”

To the children, as they came one by one, he could say nothing but “God bless you.” “Ready both in body and soul.” And “Take care of her.”

And once, when he thought Grace was sleeping in a chair by the bedside, with her head on the pillow, she heard him say—

“Once more my dove will come to me across the snow. But, ‘*if it be possible, let this cup pass*’ from us.”

She looked up into his face. He was ready ; but he would not have chosen to go ;—not yet.

The anguish of the sacrifice, and the parting were, then, not only hers, as she had been feeling.

She could still support him ; she had still something to do for him ; and at once she grew strong.

“We will drink the cup together,” she said, for the first time answering what he had said. “Maurice, we do ; *together*.”

Once more, also, they drank that other cup together, we, and Winifred, and Grace—the Cup of Blessing !

“It is better to be with Christ,” she said.

“*His will is best*,” he answered, “always, for us all.”

He would not say, even then, that he felt it better, in itself, to leave her to struggle alone.

By that she knew how truly he was himself to the last. He could not at the very last have chosen what seemed best only for him ; although that best were Paradise. And with the name of Jesus and of the Father on his lips, he passed away, taking that last step which he had loved to think was also a first,—taking it but as one of the countless steps before, in which he had tried to follow the Master’s footprints.

CHAPTER XIX.

MONICA'S NOTE-BOOK.

WILL she live? Will our mother live for us? She will, if she can. Of that we have none of us any doubt.

And, generally, I think she will be able, for our father's sake.

One day, when I almost entreated her, she said—

“Live for you? I must be twice myself to you. Perhaps I have not been enough *mother*. I will try to be more.”

Yes, double herself for us (if that were possible), when she can only be half herself here on earth any more for ever!

Yet, as Margaret says, she has had no long watching and nursing to wear away her strength, and no sudden shock to paralyze her nerves.

Sometimes I think the sweetness of the old happiness will never die for her. Sometimes I think the love was so great that it cannot be broken; that to her, as to no one else, it is living still. Sometimes I know it. For it is so, in my measure to me.

I feel sometimes as if I were nearer mother, if I may say so, in the sorrow than any one. And very often I wonder at myself, he seems still so near, I cannot feel him gone. And I think half the world seems half asleep, as I was, before death awoke me, as to what the *Invisible World* is.

It seems to me as if a door in heaven had been *opened* by Death ; and so many seem to feel as if it were a door *shut*.

I certainly did not believe, really, in death before.

But I do feel, also, as if I had hardly believed in heaven, in the unseen Church, before.

The great stay is, I *have* believed in God and in our Lord. I have believed ; I *do* believe. I used often to wonder if I quite did. But now I know I do.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is living in heaven. I am absolutely sure of it, as I am that I am living on earth.

And those who love Him and leave us are with Him.

But what seems so surprising and new to me is the intertwining of heaven and earth, which I never knew before.

Our Saviour is only unseen, not absent.

Heaven is only unseen, not absent.

The Bible says so, certainly—has been saying so all these centuries.

“ Surrounded by so great a cloud.”

Just as on the mountains, all at once you enter into a cloud. It seems to me as if I had entered into that cloud.

Only the mountain-cloud is a cloud of mist, and dims everything.

And this is a cloud of light, and clears everything.

I *see* that this life is only a little bit of the great whole of our life.

It is no more life, the world. It is *this* life, *this* world.

And, oh, the wonderful difference that makes !

What does Christianity, life and immortality brought to light, mean, unless it means this ?

And yet things, the very same things, from what should seem to be the very same point, look so differently to each of us.

For instance, Austin. I was saying something like this to him yesterday. I thought he would especially comprehend what I mean. Because, I think, the older Church—certainly the early Church, perhaps even the mediæval Church and the devout Roman Catholics—sometimes seem to understand just this better than some of the Reformed Churches.

But I shall never forget the look of terrible blank trouble in his eyes as he answered me—

“Don’t speak to me of faith,” he said. “I feel as if I had been *playing at faith* all my life, and could lay hold on nothing.”

“Oh, Austin,” I said, “tell mother.”

“Mother!” he said. “Do you think, even I am quite base and untrue enough for that? There is strain enough on her already.”

“I don’t think she is under any strain at all,” I said, “either to struggle upwards or to see beyond. I think she is absolutely upheld by a mighty arm, and I think she is looking steadily in through an open door.”

“What can you or I know, Monica,” he said, “of what mother feels? I hope I am learning, at least, to understand that I, who fancied I had ‘something to draw with’ from any depths, have nothing to draw with, in my own heart or any one else’s. Oh, Monica, ‘nothing to draw with; and the well is deep.’”

I said I thought that was much to learn, for any of us.

But he would not say any more to me.

To Eustace I had scarcely thought of speaking. I was afraid the doubts which seemed so often in his mind must trouble him especially now.

But yesterday he spoke to me.

It was Monday afternoon, and I was below, in the *ing Room*, looking out of the window at the barges

going up the river and the ships going down to the sea, and thinking of something father had said to me on our last Monday afternoon's walk together. It is only three weeks since he and mother had that delightful country walk together, which he wrote a few lines to me about.

It was something about not living *inland* spiritually, I think it was in these words:—

“Remember it is shipwreck we have been saved from. Keep near the coast, my child, always. Let us keep in sight of the wreck, and the rescue, and there we shall be able to help best. For the storms and shipwrecks have not ceased.”

As I was thinking of his words, I felt a hand on my shoulder, laid there gently, as his might have been.

It was Eustace.

“Poor dear Monica! No one can miss this afternoon more than you.”

“But I shall never *lose* those afternoons!” I said. “The words come back to me, again and again. The past is just what we can never lose.”

“But oh, Monica! If we *have* lost it!” he said. “If we did not altogether possess it while we might!”

“Even then, *he* is not *in the past*,” I said. “It is only the hours with him that are past. I have been thinking how strange it must seem to St. Paul and Mary Magdalene and all the blessed, to hear us speaking of them as men and women of the *past*,—they, present with the Lord, and with all the generations seen on earth no more. I have been wondering what it must be to step into that great Present of heaven, and how very strange it must be to hear the one generation which is streaming into it from this life, talking of those who are there, living, before us, as if they were dead, behind us.”

“Oh, sister,” he said, “you *believe*. And I scarcely believe and what I don't. I have been

playing with doubts, as if they were blunted weapons at a tournament. And now I find they are poisoned darts, pointed with deadly poison, or with mortal fire. And I must encounter them truly and strenuously with all my mind and soul, and know, not what may be doubted without danger, without casting away everything, but what is true, what may be believed, and what must be doubted. And I would give years for one Monday afternoon with father, to be able to ask him just a few questions. He believed with his whole being, not only with his heart, as he loved, but mind and heart and soul and strength. And what would I give for one of those calm, reasonable, strong words again! Now I have to fight out my battle alone."

"He would have said we all have, always," was all I could answer.

And then, as he was turning away, I could not help adding—

"Eustace, I think nothing in the world would have made him happier than to hear you say this."

"Is that any comfort, Monica?" he replied almost fiercely, "now that he cannot hear?"

"How do you know that?" I said. "The angels know such things, and they cannot care as much to know them, as he would. Do you think they are blind and dumb and deaf in heaven?"

He kissed me as he went away.

So different the same things are to each of us! So different are the kinds of playthings Death smites out of our hands, the kind of unrealities it shivers. For it does smite and wither all that is not true to the core; and nothing else, I think, in the end, not even playthings, so far as we are children and want them.

May came into the Long Room just after Eustace left.

She strayed about in a very desolate way for some time, poor darling, and then she sat on the floor, and took the dog into her lap in a grave disconsolate silence, stroking him, but not saying any of her usual caressing words. I went and took her and Dot together on my lap in the great old easy-chair with one arm.

"Monica," she said, at last, through the tears she tried to stop, "I don't know what to read. Is it loving and right to wish to read at all? I don't seem able to bear history, and I know 'Florence and Mary' so well, and most of the Sunday stories make me cry, so that I can't get on. And the Bible," she sobbed, "it seems as if that was all in father's voice! and I shall never hear it again. Shall I ever," she added suddenly through her tears, "be able to read fairy tales or anything again, now that it is always like Sunday, and Sunday without *him*? Shall I ever care, or will it ever be right? I don't want it *not* to feel like Sunday—the dear old Sundays; but it would be dreadful to get tired of Sunday. We never used."

We cried together some time, which comforted us both a little, I think.

And then I told her she would care for everything, again, that is worth caring for; that father being in heaven no more made it wrong to like fairy stories, or play, than the Lord Jesus himself being in heaven.

She looked up in my face, with a smile beaming all over hers.

"To be sure, Monica, she said, "I never thought of that. The saints and the angels have been there all the time. Heaven is not now beginning, is it, because father has begun to be there? And, of course, God knows, and they all know, as well as father knows, that I am only a little child."

"Yes, darling," I said, "they all know you are only a little child, and that your playthings

tures to you, just as they know we are *all* but children, compared with what we are to be, and so many of our grown-up treasures must seem playthings to them.

“Yes, Monica,” she added, adding, with a little hesitation, “only please not to put Dot among the playthings, as if he were a thing, and not himself.”

CHAPTER XX.

MARGARET'S NOTE-BOOK.

“ **P**ERHAPS one day something will happen to us,”
I wrote in this book such a short time since.

How childish the creature seems who could have written that! How far off the time seems when it could have been written!

I never dreamt of anything happening but to us all together.

In fact, I think we none of us really believed in death. I wonder if any one ever does until it comes and lays life waste, and opens the dreadful chasm at our very feet.

I wonder about so many things. It is strange. But it seems as if Monica and I had changed places. Her distractions and perplexities seem smitten into harmony, as if an electric flash had passed through them, and made them a unity in her heart. The world seemed so difficult and incomprehensible to her before; and now she seems to see through things to the light, as if death for her had rent the veil instead of drawing it closer.

Whilst, to me, the terrible realities seem almost as if they had now began to exist. I suppose what Austin used to call her way of looking at things in the abstract, and mine of seeing them in the concrete, has to do with it; or rather the character which made us *see* saw the *perplexities* and chaos under *haze of our own bright home life.*

shine is gone, I seem to have fallen into the chaos, whilst she has reached beyond to the Spirit brooding over it, and the order working out through it.

I cannot see any meaning or good in this desolation. I do try to bow, and to feel it is only my childishness. But I always did see meaning and good in everything before. At least, I thought I did, and I suppose I took that for faith.

And now that I have to trust absolutely that God is good, without a glimpse how the anguish He has sent can be good, it is a very different thing.

There is mother! what did she want to make her better? And how can it make her better, or any of us, to have one so just, and wise, and good, who loved God, and all of us so dearly, taken from us?

We always felt he was a hallowing, inspiring presence in our home. And how are we to turn round in a moment, and hope we are to be better without it?

Some one said something dreadful, the other day, about God smiting idols. But he was no idol to any of us. "Hands have they, and handle not; feet have they, and walk not; neither speak they." And he was always lifting up hands that hang down—he was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and the voice that spoke answers to all our perplexities; and in tender rebuke to all that was wrong, and in ennobling sympathy with all that was feebly struggling upwards.

Idols are some thing, or dream, that we make and worship for our own selfish sakes, and that cannot help us.

He was a being God had made and taught, that we loved for his own sake, and for God and duty's sake, who helped us at every turn.

And it is not as if it were only ourselves. It is the *whole parish*. How he loved and how he laboured for *them!* How he watched, and waited, and toiled, and

planned for one wandering, tempted soul! And how he rejoiced when any came back, and overcame anything evil! And how he sustained and trusted, through failure after failure, until the victory became sure!

"Overcoming evil with good."

And now, if the holiest man in the world comes among the people instead, they cannot be his people in the same sense, for so long. Divine power cannot create twenty years.

And he might so easily have had twenty years of such work longer!

How the poor did mourn for him! People that we never knew had cared for what he said and did.

Can that be a glimpse of the meaning? Can it?

Would they really have so cared but for this?

If it might be given to me to see a little bit of good springing out of it for some one, I think I could bear it so much better. Because I have so little imagination. Because, then I know, he would be satisfied. And I can never think Paradise itself would satisfy him unless he felt it was good for *us* he should be there.

He *could* not have wished to go:

* * * * *

I had written so far when mother came in and found me crying bitterly.

She looked at the last words, and taking my hands in hers, she said,—

"No, Margaret, I believe he did not wish to go."

"Oh mother," I said, "how can we bear it, if it was not even good for him?"

"My child," she replied, "It is infinitely better for him. I am sure of that. I live on that."

And her dear pale, worn, heavenly face looks as if she did.

"But he did not wish it. How could he? 'not any physician choose to stay and help th-

than go to a land where there is no sickness? The sick, whose diseases and sufferings he knows, and is helping to cure?"

"And had he not *us*? What is Paradise compared to a wilderness, where we can open fountains in the rock for people we love dying of thirst?"

I looked up at her, bewildered.

Then the tears, so rare with her, gathered and fell, and her lips quivered.

"I know what you are feeling about it," she said. "It was all but intolerable to me, until a voice seemed to say, 'Would not you have had him drink of the cup I drank of, and be baptized with the baptism I was baptized with?' And then it all shone in on me. Not Paradise itself, *because it is Paradise* is better, *but the will of God is best*. I saw it at last for him. And then another thought came, Margaret. *He sees it now for me*—for us. The will of God. Doubt it, you are in chaos. Resist it, you are in hell. Bow with your whole heart and soul to it, you are steeped in the peace of heaven. For what makes heaven? 'I delight to do Thy will.'

"I see that God's will must be best for him. I see that he sees the will of God must be best for us. And that does really hold me up, like a strong living hand."

And she is upheld, and upholds us all.

Then she kissed me, and went away.

But before she left she turned back and said, "It is not a *thought* that will uphold you, Margaret; not even *that* thought within your heart, except for a time. It is the will outside you, above you, not your own will, but *God actually there, always*, moulding your will to His."

And now that she has left, it seems to me it is just possible that, even for her, something of strength, not *weakness*, ennobling, not lowering, may come, even out *of this*.

And it is a comfort to think we need not choose it, only take it; that even *he* did not—but went before u in this dreadful path, also, as in so many difficult or pleasant paths before.

Weak that I am, I prayed to see. And it seems as if God had given me to see,—to see Jesus, shining through my mother's life and look.

CHAPTER XXI.

MARGARET'S NOTE-BOOK (*continued*).

WE met in the summer parlour to-night to decide what must be done.

Mother thinks we may refuse—that is, really ought to refuse—all the generous offers that have been made to take care of us, and provide education and everything for us, in various homes of our relations. She thinks the family is a sacred divine institution, and that we are a family still. And she says we must hold each other's hands all the tighter now, because holding tight is all there is to bind us together, now.

This is a great comfort, to feel that we have a right, that is, a duty, to act as a family still. Some people seemed to think we were a flock without a shepherd, to be drafted off into other people's flocks.

A flock must be scattered abroad, and become some one else's, if the shepherd is smitten.

But we are not a flock, but a family; and father remains our father always, and has most surely not learned to love us and to care for us less, mother is sure, being where he is, and what he is, and with Whom.

And we all feel that we have to carry on father's life.

But in order to be a family, we must separate for a time.

Monica is going to the Felix-Hunters for a time to *live in their* house, near Hyde Park, as their governess.

Dora and Dorothy are going to Germany and France, to connections of ours there, to learn French and German more perfectly. Austin is to be at Oxford, and Eustace is to live partly at Aunt O'Brien's, to prepare for the civil service examination. And mother, May, and I, are to take possession of a village school-house not far from Aunt Katharine's, where I am to be schoolmistress.

This last plan is strongly objected to by some of the relations. Aunt Katharine considers it Quixotic, but does not oppose.

But I think, although we might have income enough without, it would take away that dreadful feeling of drifting, which seems to seize us whenever we think of leaving the old home, if I had a positive employment binding me to time and place. It would give some of the sense of necessary regularity of hours, and interchange of enforced rest and work, which help to make a home so much more solid in which there are men going in and out. And mother thinks she might find it a help to have May's education thrown on her.

And all this is only temporary, tending to the hope of our having a home again together one day, perhaps in London, where we girls might perhaps go out to various work, and the boys now and then be with us, Austin perhaps always. We think of a middle-class school. Our life has given us so much sympathy with the struggles of the lower middle class.

And meantime mother has such a passionate love of the country, of the quiet, the fresh air, the beautiful things coming and going without our providing, that we think it may soothe her to live near a village for a little while. She has, we all think, just a little look of strain, now and then, as if it would do her good to be folded in quiet for a while. She will not spare herself, or have anything given up which she thinks binds us together as a family.

Even the Sunday evening singing which we always had together she could not bear that we should let drop.

"Least of all," she said, "ought we to drop the hymns. In those we are sure we are sharing what he delights in."

And I do think that is becoming the happiest and most sacred thing we do, terrible as it was at first.

Even Austin's face seems to brighten a little, then. And his grief seems more impenetrable than any.

I wonder if it is easier or harder to have to break up our home.

Very often I feel as if lodgings here, like those mother and her father used to have over Mr. Treherne's the greengrocer, would be better than the loveliest home anywhere else in the world.

Anywhere else we shall begin, grown-up, rounded-off atoms. Here we have always the childhood in us to people's hearts and imaginations; the childhood, and the heritage of father's work.

Monica says she thinks it matters comparatively little which form the sorrow takes, having to live on in the home unroofed, or having to go out from it into the world without a roof. The roof is really off. The blessed, sacred, perfect home *is* gone. And the roof for us has become the great starry roof of the world.

But to me all the familiar things, and places, and people are so much parts of ourselves, that it seems to make a great difference.

And the people are so sorry.

While we remain, they say, it seems as if father must be coming back. And I believe something of that delusion now and then is on me.

The old woman with the "sweety" shop, we used to make wonderful varieties of toffy for in the Long Room, *cocoa-nut* and *monkey-nut* and almond, showed me yes

terday the remains of a store of battledores and shuttlecocks Walter had made for her.

"The feathers won't stick in those I buy now," she said, "and the children say they will go to the shop in the High Street."

Poor, pathetic, little, cheap, rude toys, which the children look longingly at many a time before they can raise the farthings to buy them, no wonder the dearly-bought treasures are subject to keen inspection.

Yet even in these alleys how often we have seen the children

"Fretted by sallies of their mothers' kisses,
With light upon them from their fathers' eyes!"

Happy little ones, in any alley, for whom that light is not quenched!

How the sympathy of the people has gone to our hearts! I cannot tell how to express what I feel about this sympathy of the poor with our troubles. Mrs. Mowlem's took a strange form.

"Miss Margaret," she said, "I'm going straight to the workhouse. The world is too strong for me, my dear, what with the weakness of my stomach, and the gin palaces so convenient. I never thought to do it. But I shall be safe there. And I've set my heart on giving satisfaction to poor dear master and missis and Miss Lavinia, at last."

So to the workhouse she went, as a refuge from temptation and a house of humiliation, a kind of religious order and retreat which perhaps it constitutes for not a few.

The Divine Rule is not without its hair-shirts and scourges, and its discipline of silence and strict seclusion.

And Fan has promised to go and read the Bible to her sometimes there.

The Belgian priest who wor
Austin something whic'

rish told
e took

Austin into his rooms, and showed him a little row of French Roman Catholic books which father had given him. Père Gratry's "Les Sources," and some sermons of Lacordaire's, and Pascal's "Pensées," and some ecclesiastical histories of Ozanam's, and among them De Presensé's "Le Rédempteur," for which one of the three assassinated Archbishops of Paris is said to have given special thanks to the author, as an answer to the "Vie de Jésus."

"He knew we are not rich!" the Belgian said. "I read these books often. Ah, we can never hope too much from the charity of God. The sacrifice of the Lord is immeasurable. Invincible ignorance! a blameless life! Alas! which of us will not need purgatorial fires? And are not all fires tempered by the mercy of God?"

The minister of Ebenezer, also, a particular Baptist, and under impressions that the mercy of God and the redemption of Christ have considerable limitations, one of the extremest section, stopped Eustace in the street.

"You would not think it any disrespect that I could not attend your father's funeral." (Ministers and members of all other sects did.) "Poor dear gentleman, there were many things he was never able to see into, *here*. We had many discussions. But I could never move him; and of course, thank God, he could not move me. But he did better than most who see farthest. And no doubt he sees farther than any of us now; farther than any of us!" And having so delivered his conscience, Eustace said his heart trembled in his voice, as he added, "Yes, surely now, dear man, he sees further than any of us. For he *went* a good way farther than most of us, in holiness, even *here*."

Then the gifts, the parting gifts, how they went to our hearts; so precious, because so small; so immeasurably much, because so inevitably little. And the delicacy in *the choice of* which of us they were given to.

A great number were showered upon May; a leather collar and chain for Dot from the old saddler, a little model ship from one of Walter's boys, with the hope she would find a pool to sail it in; a Japan workbox that a widow's son had brought home from foreign parts, the one ornament of her poor bare room.

There was no formal presentation from the parish. The home was to be broken up. And to them it had always seemed so full and fair. But there was one request, to be allowed to have father's photograph copied.

And after we left, there came down to mother the loveliest jewel case, with a miniature from this photograph set in a gold locket, massive, but most delicately designed and finished.

The dear people, distrusting their own taste, and bent on having the very best, to meet my mother's, had gone to the most expensive and artistic jeweller they could hear of in the "West End."

And oh the flowers laid on him, at last; costly wreaths, as at a royal funeral, violets from children's hands.

There at least they knew there could be no refusal, no pain in taking what had cost the giver much.

And who dared say the alabaster box and the precious ointment were wasted?

Which of our treasures is *not* wasted, except those of which love gets the distribution?

To me there seems something sublime in the disinterestedness and generosity of this sympathy of the poor.

Such sorrow as ours would have brought many of them to the threshold of the workhouse, to want of daily bread. But they seem to think it merely natural that they should suffer, and strange that we should.

When some portion of the heavy burdens falls on us, we moan and wonder and count it strange, as

strange thing happened unto us ; but on the poor the yoke rests with an unquestioned familiarity, and is accepted with a brave unconscious patience which must, I think, go far to assimilate them to the likeness of Him who as a sheep before his shearers was dumb.

Good was the path father and mother chose twenty years, low in the valley, among the toilers and sufferers.

Never may my lot be on the dreary, icy heights, away from them and their burdens. Never *shall* it be, please God. Never can we lose the links these twenty years of father's life have wrought for us with those who are with us always, through whom we may minister to Him with whom our father is now for ever.

CHAPTER XXII.

WINIFRED'S MOAN-BOOK.

FAN has been sitting with me to-day, with her baby, in the old rock-garden by the fountain, where first we met, when I first heard her voice plaintively appealing through the gate,—

“Please, lady, give me a flower.”

One of the lives Maurice has helped to change and raise! “For what is our joy and crown of rejoicing? Are not even *ye*, in the presence of our Lord at His coming?” Yes, “even *ye*,” *i.e.* simply seeing those we have tried to help, saved, good, and blessed for ever. No heavenly decorations; no glory set visibly on *us*; simply *simply seeing them there*, and wondering that the little we did helped to bring them there, and wondering more that our Lord, who did so much to bring them there, recognises our poor fellow-working.

Joy shared between us and them, the saved; and between us and Him, the Saviour.

Oh! is our Maurice indeed reaping this?

Fan has stepped into the large and wealthy place now, and we into the shadow and the ravine.

Life has widened for her and brightened. God has given her the best flowers and fruits of this life. For us this is a time of pruning. And pruning means bare wounded branches; not flowers only, but rich visible promise of fruit, apparently ruthlessly cut off and thrown away.

We make too much, I think, sometimes, of the distinction between poverty and riches, since death impoverishes and life enriches all alike; since the joys and sorrows, the temptations and victories, are common to us all, and it is only the cares and pleasures which are different; and since labour, to be worth anything among rich or poor, must be hard enough and continuous enough to tire us. Only in the sweat of our brow can any of us eat our true bread.

The dear old nest by the riverside is empty. Do we not all know that nests only begin to fulfil their purpose when they are empty? when the nestlings are grown up and fledged, and have flown away, and are working and singing, each in its own place?

What is this whole earth but such a nest?

And what is our England, especially, among the nations, but such a nest?

But how hard it has been to see that nest abandoned! I stayed the last week with them, and helped to dismantle it.

"You understand; for you remember the beginning!" Grace said to me. I felt her sorrow so unapproachable. But she does all she can to let me share it.

"He was yours, sister," she said one day, "before he was mine."

"The thing which tries me," she added, after a pause, "is when people, even the dear children, want to be *more* to me, or *closer* to me, than before; as if any one, as if the whole world could fill the least bit of his place in my heart, or *as if it were empty*. Even what some people say about God filling the void seems to me untrue; as if love were material substance, and one of its qualities were impenetrability, or as if God were merely an ocean filling up places where something solid is taken away. He is light, vibrating through all the elements; *life, living in all life*; love, living in all love. He does

not need to make room for Himself by making a desert and a desolation. He made room for Himself, by creating the worlds. And what we call death is only a dark step into a fuller life. The emptiness of my home here does not draw me to God ; sometimes it hides Him from me, as if it never, never could be His will it should be. But the fulness of his life there does. Yes, Winifred, sometimes I think it does."

We were sitting in the summer-parlour late on that last evening in the old home.

The room was uncarpeted, and occupied only with a few packing-cases. The children had gone to sleep, wearied out with the exertions of the day.

The window was open, and, in the silence of the night, the rush of the great river swept on to the sea.

Opposite us, on different reaches of the river, rose forests of masts, with shapeless blocks of warehouses lining the various docks.

The moonlight spanned the river with another river of silver cresting the ripples ; its edge broken by the black mass of a barge with its glimmering red light, the hearth-fire of one of those floating families, as nomad and often as little Christianized, as if they were Bedouins of the desert.

Close beneath us some little boats were swaying about in the tide, and now and then two small figures could be seen clambering from one to another of the empty black coal barges moored to the shore, in search of a night's lodging, or of materials for the day's bread.

I was thinking how the social strata are convulsed and reversed and contorted in our life. If you make the section horizontally, what different formations on the same actual level, primitive, recent, fiery crystallizations, petrified deposits, crumbled soil !

And if you make the section vertically, as here, what centuries of civilisation are co-existing in one ; the

nomad barge-families, too often savage as any that the Romans ever found here ; the ragged homeless children who have not even such a home as the barge-cabin ; the labourers whose voices resound along these shores and among the shipping all day, for whom history and literature are scarcely existent, unless they shine on them through Christianity and in the Bible ; and then the ship-owners and merchants, whose palaces, built on these foundations, are enriched with all treasures of art, ancient and modern.

And between all these, this family had been a living link all these twenty years.

And this link was now to be severed.

We had been sitting silent some time, hand-in-hand, by the window, when Grace said tenderly, I suppose in answer to some unconscious look or pressure of the hand I held, "You are thinking of something that has to do with me, sister. Tell me. You know I have to put down the portcullis when some people speak, because they try to comfort me ; and that is what can scarcely be borne from any one. But never for you."

And I told her my thoughts.

"If this has been done for twenty years, it cannot be broken," she said, "and I think in a measure it has. It cannot be lost for the children, nor for you, nor for me, nor for the people. For surely, surely, whatever he did, he did not preach himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord,—crucified, and redeeming us by the sacrifice of Himself, through love,—in no other way ; to be followed by that path, the Way of the Cross, the sacrifice of self through love,—in no other way. I dare not, I dare not, look on the past for a moment as something closed, but only as something beginning, for him and for us."

CHAPTER XXIII.

MARGARET'S NOTE-BOOK.

IT is over. The old home is broken up. The places and faces familiar to us from childhood will never more be the natural daily scenery of our lives.

The streets full of toil and traffic, the docks and warehouses gathering men and things from all the world, the broad river bringing daily the sea-water to its banks, and daily bearing men and merchandise on their way to all seas and lands, are exchanged for the quiet monotony of this little inland village of Combe Regis, where the daily incidents are the labourers going forth to their labour and their work until the evening; where the hours are marked by the cocks "crowing in the morn," and the cows coming home to the milking in the evening; where the days are marked by the farmers' wives going to the weekly market at the neighbouring town, and by the church bells on Sunday; and where the months are marked by ploughing and sowing and reaping, hay-harvest and wheat-harvest, threshing and winnowing, just as they were centuries ago.

There is a feeling of rest about it all. And I feel it much more here in our little house in the village than at Aunt Katharine's. Here we seem under the household rule of Nature, and Nature at our service, in a sweet homely manner I never felt before.

I have to get up quite early to light the fires and

take in the milk, as our little maid only comes for a few hours in the middle of the day.

And the quiet of the morning-time, thus gained, is sweeter to me than anything. Our little garden, the school-house garden, slopes to one of the delicious pattering brooks of the dear west country. A clump of elms stands near, on the other side, inhabited by a colony of rooks; perhaps I should rather say by an aboriginal tribe of rooks, to whom we are as new settlers.

In the thickets of bramble and hazel on the banks, in the hedges, under the eaves, all kinds of birds have made their nests.

The waking up of all these creatures, with their infantile twitterings, and business-like cawings, and maternal chirpings, and sweet ejaculatory versicles, swelling now and then into the full tide of song, is a delight. For all the songs are indeed songs of praise. *Qui laborat orat*;—and all creatures that are innocently happy praise by the very fact of their happiness.

People who live in large country houses with back courts and stables, smooth-shaven lawns and cut-out symmetrical flower-beds, have little idea, I think, how sweet it is to wake actually amongst nests. One confiding pair of swallows have built under the eaves of mother's window.

And then comes the waking of the village, of the farm-yards on its outskirts, cocks and hens, pigs and calves, with their various modes of indicating the common desire for breakfast, more poetically expressed by the "fowls of the air."

And then the human voices calling, remonstrating, conversing, greeting, cheering the cattle to their work, calling the poultry to their food.

And by that time my leisure is over for the May comes down, we get the breakfast, lay the table in the little bay window, with t

eggs and the glass with fresh flowers for mother; and the little French earthenware coffee-pot, and the creamy milk, and the pat of the only true butter in the world, the west-country butter, on a wet vine-leaf; and the Bible for family prayer.

For we still have what we call family prayer, mother and May and I, morning and evening: all the dear names remembered one by one, and the dearest name of all, understood through all; the footsteps we pray for grace to tread in, and the eternal joy we pray to reach.

Our family prayer always seems to me now as if we were offering it in a side chapel (or perhaps sometimes it seems in a crypt chapel) of some great beautiful cathedral where full service is going on above, and our little rill of prayer and praise trickles into the great tide of adoration.

And then we sit down, May and I, in the window-seat, and mother in the beehive chair; and the contented chirping of birds, for whom the excitement of breakfast and of their morning work are over, and the murmurs of bees, come in, as they circle about the two rows of queenly Annunciation lilies, which, alternately with cabbage and damask roses, border the little straight walk to the front garden-gate.

Not seldom, too, the breakfast is cheered by the appearance of the post-mistress's little boy at the wicket, with our letters, which it is May's prerogative to fetch.

I always had a natural taste for kitchens, especially farm-house best kitchens; and our sitting-room has just the touch of that which I like.

The school-house is a building which Aunt Katharine added on to a small old farm-house.

There is a small second kitchen provided with an
v, modern, small kitchen range, with every con-

But in the front kitchen there is still the old
hearth and open chimney, and at the side

the "chlomen oven," heated at intervals with wood, which bakes the sweetest bread in the world.

Besides this, we have a tiny larder and dairy. I had a romantic ambition to make our own butter, but have abandoned it.

In a corner of the garden we have a poultry-house, the inhabitants spending their days in a cheerful mendicant fashion on the road in front of the house.

And up-stairs there are two bedrooms, one with a repetition of the small bay-window, which is mother's and May's; and a small one opening into it, with a case-ment looking to the east, against which the branches of an old oak occasionally sweep in stormy weather, and where the birds converse and soliloquize, and debate and dispute, and go off into melodious ecstasies, heeding us as little as if we were "fowls of the air" ourselves, and not merely human creatures recommended to "consider" them.

It is a busy life for me.

I like it more and more, now that the children are getting at home with me.

It is delightful to me to have a real relationship to them; to have duties to them as really as their mothers have, and for which no especial thanks are to be expected; recognised, expected, paid services; not to be coming in among them at intervals from above, but working among them as bound to serve them.

Besides, as Monica has a natural delight in teaching, I believe I have a natural delight in ruling and governing.

I do enjoy arbitrating in their little quarrels, bringing order out of disorder; seeing the refractory little ones, whose instinct is opposition, gradually getting into the atmosphere of submission, and transferring their ambitions into eagerness to give the first answers, and sing *nost energetically*.

Moreover the teaching, as a part of the governing, grows more and more interesting to me.

The beauty of the New Testament parable teaching is more apparent here, where one has not, as often in London, to teach both sides of the parable; where, instead of cornfields and lilies of the field needing as much explanation as the lessons drawn from them, Nature herself takes up the parable, and, as at the first, we see the fields "white already to harvest," and are called on all sides by their own voices to "consider the fowls of the air."

Not that my heart is unfaithful to the dear toiling people of our old London parish. Ah! too much, too much, I fear, my heart is there; and the cheerful things I try to see and do see and commend to myself in our lot here are like a mother singing lullabies to a fretful child.

The rosy round faces here cannot have for me the pathos and interest of many of the sharp, pale, little faces there.

Here, one has to wake up every one, children and older people, to find out that there are any questions to be asked.

There, the questions came readily enough, pressing hard, even on infancy, in the struggles, and problems, and social contrasts of the Great City. And it is certainly more interesting to have to teach by answering questions than by waking people up to ask them.

At least it is so to me. I am too much given to take things easily myself, to take everything for granted, as they do. Falling asleep is rather too much my own danger, under the sweet monotonous hum of all this regularity of natural life.

And yet even here, in this remote corner of England, it is not slumbrous, as I fancy it must be in some inland nooks in the midland districts.

Scarcely a family but has some relations in Australia or in America. The post-mistress has an uncle who was one of the West country Wesleyan founders and law-makers, like the old Greek colonists, of the Vigilance Committee of San Francisco.

And some have cousins—fishermen and seamen; and there are families of miners.

Everywhere the *Wandertrieb* of our race, which replenishes the earth and subdues it, confronts us; the imperial motherly destiny of our England, which makes every nook of her quiet valleys an inlet into the wide world; every one of her tranquil homesteads a possible school for new nations; every family in her farms, or villages, or parsonages, or manor-houses a possible family of founders.

There is no inland isolated life in England. We are too truly an island, and have taken up our island destinies, I think, too widely, ever to lead a life of isolation.

Nevertheless, how my heart goes back to the narrow streets and the alleys and courts of the old London parish!

Here, the people are like mountaineers on a solitary height overlooking a wide world. There, it seemed sometimes too much like their being at the bottom of a blind alley—a *cul-de-sac* from which there was no escape.

There is not a corner of England so remote as to be out of the great currents which are ceaselessly moving men hither and thither into the cities, into the wildernesses, across the seas, to colonise, to conquer.

It is the great city itself in which the population seems sometimes to become a hopeless stagnant sediment. There is no back eddy from the dark corners of London into the country. Family after family is sucked into the great whirlpool from village, and mountain, and country town; and scarcely one returns; at least, of the unsuccessful. If the golden hopes of the great city fail, they

are buried in some of its own dark depths, not carried back to be pitied and lamented among friends and neighbours in the old home.

And the second generation of the city born and bred has scarcely energy, or general practical knowledge enough, to be fit for any field of emigration.

English villages have outlets into all quarters of our English-speaking world, and training for all kinds of available work anywhere. But London, for the very poor, ends in itself. It is in London that there are those terrible desert shores strewn with wrecks, which can never be floated more; and it is just this which has made our parting from the old parish so inexpressibly sad.

There were so many there whom the misfortune or sin of others, or their own, had drifted into some obscure corner, some bare attic or dark cellar, from which there was no door of hope in this world, and where we were looked for like the sunshine, which never came to them in any other form.

And another thing, I think, which makes me so often long to be there again, is that our father's work was so essentially a work of sympathy, rather of benevolence. He gave himself, his very self, to the people, entering into their perplexities and sorrows, and bearing their burdens. And that kind of work, whilst it cannot be exhibited, or made reports of, and because it cannot, cannot be taken up by other people. The hearts that had been slowly opened to him, and, through all those years, had learned to trust him, cannot find another the same.

It is all this, I fear, that speaks in mother's- she sits sometimes in the twilight with ~~that~~ which makes one feel so terribly ~~that~~ no more, try as she ~~may to me~~¹ us twice as much.

All this, and no doubt tenfold more, which no one on earth can translate any more. It is only in the twilight that she sits so. At other times she allows herself no leisure.

That makes me anxious. She does not seem able to trust herself with leisure. And I never see her eyes linger with the old fond delight on sunset, or flowers, or on any of the beautiful things she so loved.

She points things out to me, and especially to May ; but it sounds too much as if she were tenderly explaining a child's picture-book.

Sometimes I think, if she could have some kind of illness that would not be very painful, or dangerous, but oblige her to give up, and rest, it might help her.

The sorrow is so unfathomable, and she is struggling so bravely through it, trying to bear us all up with her. And sometimes I feel as if it would be better if for a time all the billows and waves went over her, and then God's hand brought her back.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MOTHER'S NOTE-BOOK.

ONCE more in the country ; for the first time really living in the country, not here for a holiday.

We did not come here for any poor pretence of pleasure, but for work, because it seemed the thing appointed for the time.

I am not required to try to enjoy anything. I just have to be here, among the beautiful hills, and woods, and sea shores, just as I might have had to live in a solitary house in a suburban field which the brick-makers in the next field are gradually preparing to make into rows of houses, among those hapless green places which the great monster *ingens, informe* is slowly coiling round and swallowing and transforming into its own substance.

At first it seemed so terribly like that ! As if the home had been swept, and rased, and ploughed into the earth, and we set down in the middle of just such a brick-field to construct another.

But this was only one of the countless spectral delusions of that land, this land, of darkness and the shadow of death.

And then a Voice, the voice we knew and listened to, listen to still *together*, seemed to say—

“ You have not to construct the new life. The Builder and Maker, here and there, is G . not to

plan out the new road. There is no road but My footsteps. You have only, as always, to follow Me."

That was help.

But oh, how it pierces my heart when these dear children try to make me happy, especially when I see Margaret's tender eyes wistfully watching me to see if I am enjoying the beautiful things in earth, and sea, and sky!

How curiously sorrow opens one's perceptions to the people who have sympathy!

The most intolerable people are those who fancy they have universal sympathy, and can fathom every sorrow. Used I to be one of those?

I thought I understood many things, and could comfort many sorrows. But now it seems to me, to comfort sorrow is just the thing I could never venture to do again. It seems to me as if I had never known in the least what sorrow is.

Soft tender regrets for those who leave us when life is done; stirrings of pity which is only half pain; wrongs to those we love, which rouse all the strength in us to sustain them; these make us LIVE, live a fuller and deeper life.

But sorrow, real sorrow, is not life, it is death. It takes the life out of us, it crushes, impoverishes, silences, maims, kills.

The Bible calls it *fire*.

And whatever the fire may do for us in the end, while we are in it, it *burns*, burns *us*. And people (*we*, until we know) have all kinds of instructive illustrations about the metal and the dross, and gold being purified in the fire; and they come to the furnace door and ask us *how we are feeling* in the fire; they hope we are sustained, and say it is sure to be purifying us.

Sustained? We, *we*, are being burned.

• *Purified?* We feel as if we were having all the evil

in us vivified, and all the good searched and tried and found corruptible.

They trust they see One with us like the Son of Man, and that with Him the fire has no power to hurt a hair of our head.

Thank God, He knows!

He passed through the fire and knows it. Not unscathed He went through it, not unscathed He came out of it. Victorious; but through anguish, and in anguish, and over anguish.

And then there are the people who expect you to sit still and have balms poured upon you. As if sorrow were sickness, were a bodily wound. Those illustrations, how we entangle ourselves with them! Pain, bodily pain, *is* bodily pain, and can be lulled or cured; a wound *is* a wound, and can be soothed or healed; loss of fortune *is* loss of fortune, and can be met by economy or work. But sorrow is not a bodily disease, or a wound, or a temporal loss. It is just *sorrow*. Bereavement *is* bereavement, and nothing else. You cannot soothe it, or lull it, or cure it, or remove or escape, or get over it. Its essence is that it is irremediable; that it cannot change into something else.

And so, instead of sitting down and having balm poured on us, the only thing to do is to rise up, and fight the good fight, and overcome; to grasp the terrible pain to our heart, and endure it, accepting it from God; and to get strength meanwhile from Him to do what has to be done for others.

For there is *death* in sorrow; death to the heart. And to this we must not, dare not yield. We must not let it paralyze us.

For *they* are living; not dead. And life, not *death* associates us with them.

It is all so different from what I thought.

God means, yes, *means* us to suffer ; means us to be in the fire.

He is love. He loves us. I am sure of it. But what I *feel* is not the love, but the fire.

He knows what is really good for us. I am sure He is doing right, has made no mistake, although it seems on this earthly side entirely wrong for us all, and for me above all.

I would hasten on through the terrible lessons if I could. But I cannot. And I cannot learn the lessons through other people's words. I cannot pretend to myself to be one step beyond the point I have actually reached.

And that is just the sense of being in the fire, and giving myself up, there, to God, to do His will in me and with me.

It did comfort me yesterday to hear Aunt Katharine say to Margaret, who was crying, poor darling, I believe about me,—

“ My dear, be patient. Adolphe Monod said, ‘ *Les choses ne vont pas si vite.* ’ ”

Yes, God will be patient with me, I know, and I must try to be patient with myself.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MOTHER'S NOTE-BOOK (*continued*).

THANK God, I live again; yes, really *live* as I never thought possible, on this earth, more.

The power of death is overcome.

Sorrow remains. But death is overcome, even for me.

I knew always that Maurice lived, felt it; that death was no *state* in which he existed, but a moment's change through which he had passed into life. But it seemed that *I* had ceased to live;—that I was dead; at least, as far as I was conscious of anything—that was what I felt.

Looking back, I see this.

For, all the time I thought myself struggling and pressing through the waves, they had gone over me.

I was numb, and deaf, and blind.

I knew God loved; but I could not feel it. I knew the world was beautiful; but I could not taste it. I knew the children were dear and worth living for; but I could not feel anything was worth living for.

Numb, and deaf, and dumb, and blind, all that can be meant by a living heart being dead, sorrow was to me.

I used to wonder if any one had ever felt like it before, or if it always went on so; because I knew I had, bodily, to live and not die. And yet this living and not living seemed almost impossible to go on with long.

And then came that merciful ill

never I

caught in helping to nurse one of Margaret's school-children. I would not have encountered it intentionally, because I knew I had to live for the children. But the little fellow was motherless, and one day he sat with his head drooping on his breast, and I saw him, and naturally took him on my knee to soothe him. So that when on the next day it was pronounced fever, the peril having been encountered, I was free to go and help the helpless little one.

And so, I caught the fever.

Other people may be stronger and braver than I, and struggle all the way consciously through.

God knew what I could bear, and sent me *sleep*, a helpless illness which was like a sleep to heart, and mind, and spirit; and then He bore me through, like a sleeping child, in His arms.

Days and nights which had little distinction; restlessness which was not of the heart but of the body, and when there was no thinking possible, only strange visions floating around me.

No possibility of struggling, or of doing anything for any one, or of hiding any pain from any one; no duty of overcoming, or of *seeming* to overcome so as not to weaken any one else's faith.

Nothing to do but to let every one help me and serve me, and to take food and medicine when they were given me; and now and then to try to say something which would make the children not feel anxious about me, which usually, on the contrary, made the one I was trying to comfort begin to cry, a failure which I was too weak to enter into. For they were anxious about my life, which I never was. I felt so sure, from the beginning, that I had to live, and take care of them all.

Only, now, I had to be taken care of, in order to live.

I knew they were watching me with intense anxiety, *worshipping*, praying that I might be spared to them so

that any improvement sent a thrill of hope through them all, and every unfavourable symptom overwhelmed them with unspeakable dread.

I knew, in some curious, dim way, that they were all near me, although I never saw any but Margaret and Monica. They were so anxious not to agitate me by letting me know they had all been sent for. I knew what their anxiety was, by the calm in Monica's manner, and by the tender playfulness in Margaret's.

I had become as their child to them, and I liked it, and I felt I would not on any account have had them know how little the peril which so distressed them would have agitated me. Partly because of my conviction that I had to live; and partly because for a long time I could not wish anything about it. I dared not wish to die and go home, and I could not wish to live.

Until, one summer morning, through a little window at the side of my bed, waking up from a long sleep, I saw the dawn begin to break.

Slowly, slowly, from dusky neutral grey, to grey which was a colour, the loveliest colour, pearly, opal, breaking into gold and into fire, with long bars of purple cloud between.

And I felt once more how beautiful it was. And I delighted in the sweet quiet beauty, and felt it was of God, and thanked Him.

And then I thought of Maurice, and I felt he was not *out of the world* of God, but in the morning, in the light, out of the darkness for ever.

The beauty of the world, being of God, seemed, once more, a link with him. Then, one by one, the birds began to wake, not so much to songs, as to quiet happy domestic chirpings, as of mother birds who have nests to care for.

And my heart seemed to wake, not to songs, but to

quiet flutter of love, and a quiet little chirp of thanksgiving, I having also my nest to care for.

And I felt I should like to live for my nestlings, really like it, wish it; and that it was God's will, and would be; and that seemed to bring me nearer Maurice.

I felt it must be what he would wish, in itself, for the children's sake, and because God willed it.

I had always felt, in that terrible benumbed way, he could not be wishing me to die and leave them, any more than he had wished to leave us himself; and this had caused a dim feeling of disunion and separation of desire even from him.

I had honestly willed what I thought God willed. But now that I was too weak for an effort of will, it seemed as if God sent a thrill of natural wish into the will, and I became *content* to live.

Then as I lay quite still and content, a little stir in the shaded corner of the room drew my eyes to it, and there I saw my Margaret, her upturned face, pale and worn, leaning on her clasped hands, hands clasped, I felt, in prayer.

I called her to me.

She came and knelt beside the bed, and hid her face, and I stroked the pretty wavy golden hair and said, "Darling, I am better. And I am glad."

One long sob quivered through her whole frame, quickly repressed.

I knew what it meant.

They had thought, as I had, that I never could be glad again. I had ten thousand things to say, but I could not say one more then.

For in truth I was and am glad, glad in my inmost heart to live, to live and love.

All day some quaint words of an old German hymn

have been humming through my heart, as the bees among the flowers outside—

“Erst heisst der Freund die Seele ruhn
Dann essen, und hernach was thun.”

Yes ; *rest first*. In all conflicts, rest first ; rest of the whole being in God. Then food, bread of life, from Him ; then the work and the battle with Him and for Him.

Half our failures come, I think, from reversing this order. We seek to create the bread, to sustain ourselves with thoughts ; instead of receiving it all from Him. And then on this unsubstantial food, we try to gird ourselves for the conflict, until, faint and panting, we fall once more into the unutterable peace of His sustaining arms ; the bread of God is once more given us, and once more we live ; and once more, again, we can work and battle. And thoughts ennobling, quickening, spring up in our hearts ; not dry, laboriously raked up from the chaff of our own threshing-floor, but living, human, divine, springing up from the hand of the Sower, the Son of Man.

Dear, fair, wide world, not mine, nor any one's ; certainly not the devil's—but God's.

Beautiful visible world, the shell of it, the fragment of it visible to us ;—surely not less visible to them whose eyes are no more “holden” for ever, but open to see Thee, and therefore to see all things in the light of Thy Face.

Stately pure lilies, summer roses, little brook with its prattlings, and its silvery flashings, and its deep quiet pools, and the green leaves mirrored in them, and the birds drinking of them and chirping as they fly away ; and sweet tender dawns, and endlessly-varying glories of sunsets, no two alike—these are not in *my* world only, they are in the world of the Son of God, for

pleasure they are, and were created ; and therefore in the world of those who are with Him, and yielding them delight.

Our "other" visible "world" is revealed again : heaven, the universe of suns, the central fire-worlds,—with what unseen host of fair planetary earth-worlds circling round them to be lived and loved in, no one knows.

I used sometimes to feel, at first, it would be a kind of comfort if I knew he was living in some one definite place, though in the remotest star of them all. The separation into the unseen, seemed so much farther than that of any possible distance.

But God, who made and inspires and rejoices in them all, is a Spirit. And I who wonder and rejoice in them am a spirit. It is, my unseen ghost, not my eyes and ears, but *I* through these, who so delight and adore.

They are not out of the visible world, though we know not through what medium they perceive it. They have penetrated deeper into the heart of its beauty, and glory, and meaning.

We and our world are not invisible to them because they are invisible to us. The blindness and deafness is ours, not theirs. And so, I think not seldom, is even the dumbness.

This evening for the first time I touched the piano again ; ventured on some of the old music he used to love to listen to.

Mysterious world of music ! That used to be more terrible to me than all. It had been so peculiarly a world in which we two seemed to walk alone together. And when he could no longer listen, it was as if every *alternate note* of the instrument had become dumb.

There was no meaning, use, good, delight, harmony in anything.

But now this world also seems open to me again. Music is chosen as the largest, deepest expression of heaven. Song ; that is, music and poetry. This is the speech of the world where he is.

Music is no accidental extra decoration of this world. It is essential, inevitable, mathematically inevitable, part of the universal necessity of beauty in all divine work. We, in our music, are only extricating the essential harmonies hidden in all things ; art as divine as can be given to man.

God made the birds sing ; God, who is a Spirit, interwove all things with these musical vibrations ; Christ, the Incarnate Lord, Himself sang the ancient Passover hymn of His nation the night before He suffered ; and shall those who are with Him, singing the new song, the Passover hymn of the whole race, be deaf to the music "here below," which, being by divine necessity in the nature of things, cannot be *false*, however *feeble* ?

Not in individual Christian life only, not in a host of separate perfected spirits only, does Christ our Lord live, but in One Body in heaven and earth, far less divided by death, by the barrier between the seen and unseen, than by the barriers of sect and sin, among the visible and militant below.

Who made the distinction between the Church militant and triumphant ?

The Apocalypse reveals *armies* of heaven.

Who made the distinction between those who rest and those who serve ?

The Apocalypse makes a different distinction. Above, "they serve Him day and night."

"Who all night long unwearied sing ;" *unwearied* serve. And of what that serving Him me

no fresh interpretation from heaven. Not backward, at all events, and downward from St. Paul's work to Adam and Eve's work, from the glorious wilderness and battle-field work to the infantine Paradise work, from serving human creatures to taking care of flowers, from rescuing souls to pruning spiritualised vines!

We must not read the divine printing backward, making symbols into pictures.

Our May's old merry laugh in the garden, with Dot's quiet bark of response, and Margaret's soft little purling laugh mingled with it.

How sweet the sounds are!

Margaret is telling May one of Andersen's fairy tales. Laughter! how wide its range is, from hell to the borders of heaven, from mockery and frantic revelries to sweet innocent childlike laughter! There is nothing in May's laugh to jar on the hymns of angels, any more than with the songs of the larks and robins, or than there is anything in the songs of birds to jar on the songs of angels.

Love, innocent happy laughter, life, happiness—these are not the things which are out of harmony with heaven.

The only thing at real discord with heaven is *death*; death in all spheres; the *state* of death; sorrow which is death and worketh death; sin which is death and worketh death.

Childhood, all true festivals, all real joy, love, holy marriage, birth of all new delights, these, O our beloved, who live for evermore, these are the images and foretastes which lift us towards your life; and sickness, sorrow, suffering only do this by cleansing the heart of all the shallowness and hollowness which hinder its ringing true to the true love, and drinking deep of the eternal joy.

May and Margaret have just made up a number of

Easter eggs, and dressed dolls, and battledores, and shuttlecocks, and shells, and sea-weed pictures, for our old friend of the toy-shop in the alley. May has saved her weekly pence for this, and has enlisted some of Margaret's school-children's elder brothers in the construction of the battle-dores.

All our life spent in getting ingrained into the stuff of our hearts the truth that "*it is more blessed to give than to receive,*" more divine to "*minister than to be ministered unto,*" we are not surely to find our heaven in *unlearning* this! Being a little lower than the angels, we are not to be made so much lower than they are, as that would be.

Easter:—the second Easter with Maurice beyond death; the first in which the shadow seems behind me also, and we both are walking, again, as "heirs together of the grace of life;" the *charisma* of life, how magnificent and beautiful and full the words are! I have an especial pleasure in the old Greek word; it rises above all the dust of our controversies and vulgarisms, and soars to us laden with sweetnesses from a thousand gardens, old and new, graces, gracefulness, graciousness, festive beauty, and generous giving.

Heirs! not, then, only a gift, an inheritance; the delicious surprise of a new-born delight blended with the sacred endearment of a familiar inheritance; ours because children of the Father, as well as because forgiven and made free.

And *together*; yes, for ever together, as he said, "We will, we do drink every cup together."

And the gift is life.

Ah! he knows now what life means. I am only beginning to learn.

The Lord is risen indeed; risen, and therefore ~~not~~ here; risen, therefore with us always; all the days

It is one Church, above and below ; one universe, one life, one kingdom. But until lately it seems strange to think how little I really understood that the *majority*, in all senses, are there, the incomparable majority of human beings, of our existence, of our interests, of our ministries ; that quite literally this is only the threshold and the school.

I had thought I might have been at the Easter Communion this year in church.

But it was pronounced imprudent.

Therefore the old rector most thoughtfully arranged for us to receive before the morning service, in my "upper chamber."

We were quite a family gathering—Austin, Eustace, Margaret, Monica, Winifred.

"Jesu dulcis memoria
 Dans vera cordi gaudia
 Sed super mel et omnia
 Ejus dulcis præsentia."

Sweeter to me (whether from early familiarity, or from something Teutonic in my nature) is the German translation :—

"Jesu deiner zu gedenken
 Kann dem Herzen Freude schenken ;
 Aber mit was Himmelstränken
 Labt uns deine Gegenwart.
 Tröstlich wenn man reuig stehet ;
 Herzlich wenn man vor ihm flehet ;
 Lieblich wenn man zu ihm gehet ;
 Unausprechlich wenn er da."

How can we thank Him enough for making our crowning act of worship a divine act of communion ; thus giving Himself to us, as once, and for ever, for us ; gathering us not around history, or dogma, or thought about Him, but around and to Himself, and in Him to all in and with Him !

Everything is resumed in this Blessed Eucharist. His sacrifice for us, His union with us, our sacrifice of our

whole selves in union with Him to God. From Calvary to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the life-blood of the unutterable agony, the wine of the unutterable joy, all are resumed here. How life here is communicated as in nature, is the Divine secret. The fact is ours. Can we believe more than His most real presence? Can we ask more than a Roman Catholic priest I know of was wont to ask in celebrating, "Give us all Thou intendest to give in this Blessed Sacrament?"

The children surround me with little festive ceremonials, greeting every step back into life as a new festival day. How terrible this would be to me, if I were not really glad to live longer here. But I am content, "content to do Thy will;" content that this is His will.

Last week it was my first drive. Lady Katharine took me in her pony-carriage, and scolded me for my follies as affectionately as she could any of her own children.

She took me to a height from which we saw the sea; that visible suggestion of the other world beyond, unseen; the Atlantic with the grand sweep of its emerald and amethyst waves, and the leaping up of the snowy foam hundreds of feet against the dark rocks. We rested for a moment just to hear that roar, as of a great multitude, which speaks the deadly power underlying this crystalline glory. And the delicious salt sea smell came up to us, and brought me a feeling of consciously-returning health.

Lady Katharine was eloquent about curates.

She says Victor Felix-Hunter (he drops the Felix) has no necessity to occupy himself with our school; that a scheme worth trying, whether practicable or not, for the employment of young gentlewomen, is at stake in Margaret's experiment; and that she has been urging on the rector, who is much away, the importance of having an older man in priest's orders.

I did come home a little tired. The sea and Lady Katharine together are a very bracing atmosphere. But I had a long sleep; so probably both were good for me.

I don't really see that Victor Hunter comes here so very much; and when he does, he almost always talks to me.

Eustace and he are friends, and there is a kind of tender reverence in his manner to me which touches me.

I do not think, from what Monica says, he has had much to help him at home.

At first, before I was ill, I used to think his manner had a little cynicism and flippancy about it on grave subjects. But I put it down to school-boyish shyness; and I think it has worn off.

Yesterday was my first walk.

What a glory I felt it to have my two sons to lean on, in turn! Just a foolish, happy, motherly pride.

Poor boys! How tender they have been!

How I used to watch the unshod steps on the stairs, each foot put down stealthily as a cat's, and occupying and agitating my foolish heart and quivering nerves more than if it had been the tramp of an armed heel!

Then the wonderful contrivances they made for outside blinds to keep off the sun, and invalid-chairs with straps and handles to carry me down-stairs; Eustace directing like a born mechanic as he is, and Austin meekly following.

But my Austin looks sad, still. There is a steady weight on his brow which I do not like; a restlessness about his whole demeanour.

We must get him off to the university as soon as possible.

With Eustace it is quite the reverse.

The opposite questioning element in him seems

quieted; it is not like a lull or a hush, but a kind of practical daylight calm.

My two perplexed and questioning children seem changed. Their perplexities were different. With Monica they arose from a searching intellect penetrating early into the difficulties of the world, and an eager heart pained to the core by the "painful riddle of the earth," longing for solutions, and not to be satisfied by half solutions. With Eustace they arose from a restless will chafing against inconsistencies and incongruities, and revolting against "Philistine" common-place compromises by way of escape; rather enjoying the perplexities, especially if he could perplex other people with them, and content to spend his days in that exciting seeking after truth which has been said to be better than the finding, and may be so to any whose satisfaction is in mental exercise rather than in truth.

Eustace came to me in my room this evening, for what the children used to call "Half-hours with the Best Authors," the only one of the old family customs that survives.

"Mother," he said, "Austin and I wish to exchange professions. He would like to go in for the Competitive Civil Service, and I should like to be a clergyman. He will speak to you for himself by-and-by. It will be no difficulty to him. He always entered a good deal into my subjects. He is, you know, twice as much of a student as I am. The Oriental languages will be an entertainment to him. He will do much more credit to the family in that capacity than I should. But that is his share of the matter. I have to speak to you of my own."

I was sitting in the bee-hive chair; he on the old-fashioned window-seat. As he spoke these last words, a shyness came over his manner, and he was silent for a few minutes, playing with the tassels and turning his head from me towards

I scarcely knew whether or not he was waiting for me to speak ; but the reserve which curiously seems to veil the approach of all closer confidences, and most, perhaps, in the most intimate relations, fell also over me, and I could not help him.

His face was still turned from me when he began to speak again.

"Mother," he said, "you know well that there is a quantity of doubt just now in the air ; and not only that, but a quantity of very dogmatic and contemptuous denial. The amount of your belief is, by many people, considered as a kind of barometer to test your intellectual level. At a certain altitude certain luxuriant growths are left below, a little higher so many more, and so on ; whilst at a really high level all traces of the old creeds of Christendom, or, indeed, of Theism, become, in the nature of things, obsolete and impossible, and the atmosphere becomes rarefied to a point which makes breathing a labour."

"I know such doubt and denial is in the air," I said ; "but the air we breathed at home was scarcely that. Any one breathing it could scarcely think Christianity was obsolete, or effete, or impossible at a high level, or in combination with modern knowledge and thought."

"Thank God," he said, "I know it. I always knew it. Mother, my faith had deeper roots than my doubts. I think I had always a dim sense that it was so. But that very thing gave me a kind of perverse security in playing with difficulties. There was always a feeling that the shore was still within reach, after all."

"I cannot quite understand it," I could not help saying. "Your father never treated any one's real doubts as if they were a revolt to be quelled by authority. He believed Christianity to be supremely rational. He did not bow to it with his reason, and accept it with his will. He accepted it, was convinced of it, embraced it with

his whole being. He would have entered into anything with you."

"I know," he said with a very broken voice, "I felt that, mother, when it was no longer possible to ask him."

Then he left the window-seat, and came close to me and took one of my hands in his, and looked in my face as he said—

"And then, mother, I set myself, with all my mind and heart, to make, alone, the investigation in which he might so have helped me. It was no longer a question of the double authorship of Isaiah, or the growth of myths, or of what our ancestors might have been millenniums since, but of what we may be to-morrow, and," he added in a tremulous voice, "of what my father is to-day.

"Some people might say this is just the wrong moment for such investigations, when the death-mists are about us, and the tender longing to penetrate the impenetrable is on us, out of which they say half the religions of the world have grown. I don't believe it. I think what we want most is anything that will wake us up thoroughly, and compel us to fix our minds steadfastly and continuously on the subject; to ask ourselves honestly what we believe and what we do not. An indolent vagueness seems to me just the soil in which doubts flourish as luxuriantly as credulities; if, indeed, half the doubts are not *credulities reversed*, just as half the credulities are *scepticism reversed*, by the will. Don't you think there are *credulities of other people's doubts*, as well as credulities of other people's superstitions?"

"I think," I said, "and I believe your father thought, that not a few of the young men who glorify the nineteenth century and modern thought, and have too much culture to receive the Old Testament, are as little burdened with physical science or Oriental

modern or ancient thought, as some of the young ladies who despise the nineteenth century, and are devoted to Catholic doctrine, are with knowledge of councils or fathers."

"Mother," he said, "is it not like father's story of the housemaid, who told him, when he gently remonstrated with her for not coming to church, that 'she had nothing to say against his doctrine,' but that the Plymouth Brother to whom she had deserted 'gives us the Greek?'"

How thankful I am that I never suffered his name to be banished, even when it was a terrible pang to hear it mentioned, so that now his playful sayings and familiar stories will never cease to be our children's household words! God forbid that things connected with his memory should be shut up unused, like the chambers of the departed, in some palaces I have seen,—so that the very dwelling-place becomes a tomb, a place of dead memories, instead of blending its life with the life that goes on. How much we lose if the tender recollections which bring the tears and smiles together are banished into vacuums of silence!

We had wandered from Eustace's own story.

"How did you set out on this solitary quest?" I said.

"In the first place," he said, "I did not attempt to delude myself into the persuasion that any one brought up as I have been can begin with a *tabula rasa*. I don't believe any one in England, or in Christendom, in this century, can do it, any one brought up either within the fold or under the remotest shadow of any Christian Church. Christian life is at least one fact as undeniable as physical life. Christendom has a literature, has institutions. Christianity has fervent believers whose whole existence is moulded by it; you may detest or revere the results, but you cannot ignore them, or regard the religion as obsolete, by any other process than by

shutting your eyes, which is, of course, not a negative and unconscious, but a most conscious and positive process.

“The photographs are there, and you cannot efface them by any other method than by printing another over them.

“So I thought it useless to try to place myself in the position of one of St. Paul’s Athenian audience. When the words which ‘that babbler said’ have remoulded the whole civilisation and life against which they seemed so powerless, when they have been the sacred treasure of thousands of generations, moreover when they have been engraven on our hearts from infancy, through lips and lives, such as both of yours, it is the wildest delusion to think we can approach them through a calm, candid indifference, and try the experiment in a vacuum. I did not try, so that I suppose a candid sceptic might pronounce my conclusions were foregone, and my investigations worthless.

“But, nevertheless, above all things, mother, I did, and I do, desire to believe what is *true*. The *truth exists*, whether we believe it or not; and it is so entirely useless to build on anything else; so certain, if we do not fall on it and be broken as to our prejudices, it will fall on us and all we do, and grind us to powder.

“I tried to be candid, then, by honestly seeing what had to be said, and was said, on both sides.

“I *prayed*, to begin with; which some might say was begging the whole question. Then I entered on a real, earnest, painstaking study of the Bible itself, as of any other literature; poems, history, treatises, with all the illustrative explanatory criticism I could find.

“And I read the books which are supposed to contain the most destructive criticism, not the small books by small people *about* the which take it for granted their work is done polished, and the Chris-

tian Church already crumbled away to the lowest levels ; but the great books which *make* the attacks, whether by undermining or by open assault. And," he concluded, his whole countenance beaming, and his voice with a manly firmness in it which seemed new to me, " I came to the conclusion that I could spend my whole life in no nobler or better way than in endeavouring to bring home to the hearts of men and women and children the Christian religion, the life and death and resurrection, and teaching of our Lord ; all that is meant by the revelation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ; that it is life and light and healing for heart and mind and conscience. And I came to the practical conclusion, mother, that nowhere could I do this work with more freedom or thoroughness than as a clergyman of the Church of England ; than by treading, as closely as I may, in my father's footsteps."

Deeply as his words struck my heart, it was not to tears, but to an inspiring joy, and I said—

" He would not have wished you to tread in any footsteps but those of the Master ; all other examples he would have thought cramping for any but one, His only liberating and true for all."

" I know," he said. " That is what I mean by treading in my father's footsteps."

After this conversation with Eustace, I wait anxiously for the moment when Austin will give me his confidence. Yet I dare do nothing to hasten or enforce it. I have the strongest feeling that confidence is as little within the control of the giver as of the receiver, and this even most in the closest relations. Most of all, perhaps, in the relations between a parent and child. It seems to me that the want of recognition of this fact leads to countless painful jars.

The relationship between parent and child, from the

very sacredness of the reverence due to the relation from the child, demands an equal reverence on the part of the parent for the personality which is of God's creation, and is even deeper than all human relationships.

We were always anxious so to recognise the divine image in our children, that, as Jeremy Taylor says, "out of the instinctive endearments, the religion and gratitude and interest of our relationship, if possible, in the nature of things, true friendship may spring."

Jeremy Taylor's "Discourse on Friendship" was especially dear to us, and I think, if taken to heart, its wise words might prevent many a craving for the impossible, and hinder many a misunderstanding which grates on hearts which are, nevertheless, truly bound together, and wastes in petty irritations lives which might enrich each other.

Perhaps the disappointment I now feel in Austin's reserve reveals to me that I had not been altogether free from too absorbing expectations from my children.

"Friendship," Jeremy Taylor writes, "is the greatest bond in the world; and there is no society and there is no relation that is worthy, but it is made so by the communications of friendship, and by partaking some of its excellences.

"For friendship is a transcendent, and signifies as much as unity can mean; and every consent, and every pleasure, and every benefit, and every society is the mother or daughter of friendship.

"Some friendships are made by nature, some by contract, some by interest, and some by souls.

"Nature can make no friendships greater than her own excellences.

"In this scene (of nature), that of parents and children is greatest, which indeed is begun in nature, but is actuated by society and mutual endearments. The friendship of children to . . . is not properly friendship,

but gratitude and interest, and religion ; and whatever can supervene of the nature of friendship comes in upon another account ; upon society and worthiness of choice.

“ This relation on either hand makes great dearnesses ; but it hath special and proper significations of it, and there is a special duty incumbent on each other respectively. This friendship and social relation is not equal, and there is too much authority on one side and too much fear on the other to make equal friendships. (‘ Fear,’ we should scarcely say, except the tender fear which brings conscience in, and hinders freedom !) And therefore, although this is one of the kinds of friendship, yet friendship does do some things which (the relations of) father and son do not ; they are such a duty as no other friendship can annul, and having first possession must abide for ever. But then this also is true, that the social relations of parents and children not having in them all the capacities of a proper friendship, cannot challenge all the sympathies of it ; that is, it is no prejudice to the duty I owe them to pay all the dearnesses which are due here.”

Ah, between us and our children there has been so much of “ those free and open communicating counsels, and that evenness and pleasantness of conversation,” which he seems to think impossible to the relation ! The twilight, as he calls it, of natural relationship has so much dawned into the day of friendship,—the blossom to the fairest fruit of Paradise,—that I must be careful not to be exacting.

Especially now that marriage, which he calls “ the queen of friendships,” is gone from our home ; a marriage which was indeed what he says of friendship, “ a marriage of souls,” or in the words which in this quaint old folio we have so often read together, “ the greatest love and the greatest usefulness, and the most open communication, and the noblest suffering, and the

most exemplar faithfulness, and the severest truth, and the heartiest counsel, and the greatest union of minds, of which brave men and women are capable."

Ah, I must not expect that again in any one on earth, or even demand it of my children, much of it as flows between us abundantly and spontaneously now.

But it does pierce my heart to see Austin's heart evidently so heavy, and yet so closed to me ; and to know that he has a secret burden, and to feel it on my heart, and yet not dare lift a finger to help him with it.

Except in prayer. Except in seeking to lay that strong Divine hand beneath him and his burdens. And that is never in vain.

Ah, people speak sometimes as if it were a kind of *extra* in affection to leave the ninety-and-nine for the lost one.

It is simply the *necessity* of all affection, inevitable, essential to it, from the care of a shepherd for his sheep to the love of a parent for the child.

Whatever we may do for the rest of the flock, we *cannot* for an hour dismiss the sick, the suffering, the prodigal from our hearts.

What breadth, and depth, and eternity of promise must then abide in this constraining necessity to love, with Him who is Love, is the Father !

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ice is broken. And deep as the gulf is which it has opened, I am thankful.

It was not to me Austin spoke first. It was to Winifred. How much she has been to us, all our lives ! how much more than ever, she is now ! When I think how eager and ardent her nature is, and how readily, how continually, and yet how unconsciously, she has through all her life thrown all the fervour of her heart into loving where she could never be loved best, I feel inclined to waver towards the conviction that the single life, if less fully developed in humanity, is the angelic life, and will take its place more naturally among that of the heavenly ministrants.

And yet, after all, it seems ungenerous to talk of being first or second, of best and second-best, in affection.

Each character, and relation, and affection is so different that "not lesser," but "diverse" is all we need think.

In this instance, as in so many instances before, there was just a touch of freedom, and a lessening of the fear of grieving, in the relation between Austin and Winifred, which made it possible for him to let her see what he would have suffered anything rather than reveal unnecessarily to me.

And then with the loyalty, never failing with Winifred, *she gently* encouraged him to speak to me.

He chose an apparently casual moment to do this,

when Eustace was getting the donkey-chair ready to take me to the sea-shore, and I was sitting with my bonnet on in the garden waiting.

"Mother," he said, in a quiet, indifferent tone, "Eustace has told you that we wish to change professions. I know you both always felt the calling of the laity might be as divine as that of the clergy, and the usefulness in some ways as great."

"Certainly, we always thought so," I said. "Whatever is the real vocation is the highest thing possible for any of us."

He evaded that question.

"It does matter to England, not a little, doesn't it, what the character of her civilians in India is? And I think I should comprehend some of the difficulties between Europeans and natives, and try to be just. And philology is a real interest to me, which it is not to Eustace. I might perhaps bring in some slight contributions in that way."

He spoke rapidly.

"You will not object to the change, mother," he added. "Eustace would be so much better in all practical matters for you and the girls, than I could be. Not that I mean," he concluded, checking himself, "that any grand motive of self-sacrifice has influenced me. I would not have you think I pretended to that."

"I never could think you pretended to anything," I said.

"Ah, mother," he replied, with uncontrollable emotion, "I have done nothing else."

At that moment the wheels were heard, and Eustace drove round to the little gate.

"Austin will drive me to-day," I said.

Eustace yielded his place, and we set off together.

We did not pursue the subject during the drive. Donkeys, under the most favourable circumstances of

education, can scarcely be driven without absorbing attention. But when we reached the sands, and Austin had established the donkey with a bundle of hay, and me on the rocks with my shawls and cushions, he came and sate down on a rock beside me, and said, "Aunt Winifred says you had rather hear the whole truth, and that you would help me. I am not at all sure she is right, that I have any right to let my weakness add to your burdens, or that you can help me. If any one could, *you* could. But I don't believe any one can."

"Perhaps not," I said. "Most of the real battles are single combats."

"I suppose so," he said, "but I must not deceive you. If I tell you anything, I must tell you all. With me it is no battle. I see nothing real enough to battle with or about. It all seems to me a fantastic dream, and I myself the most shadowy part of it."

"That belongs to the land of the terrible shadow, where we have been," I said.

He looked for the first time for a moment straight into my eyes.

"Did you never read the 'Passing of Arthur?'" I said.

"Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
A death-white mist slept over sand and sea,
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear; and even on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought,
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist."

And ever and anon

'Shrieks

After the Christ, of those who falling down
Looked up for heaven, and only saw the mist.'

And Arthur's own words—

'On my heart hath fall'n
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be king.'

"Even on Arthur!" he slowly repeated. "Mother, what can have made *you* turn to those words? For *me* they seem made!"

"They kept dimly and fragmentarily sighing through my heart for weeks," I said.

"Even on Arthur fell confusion," he repeated, as if to himself,

" 'Since he saw not whom he fought,
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist.' "

'Looked up for heaven, and only saw the mist!'"

"Ah, mother!" he resumed. "You can never have known that!"

"I should think no one can have ever really looked up for heaven, and above all into heaven *to look for any one there*, and *not* known it," I said.

He changed his place, and seated himself on a stone at my feet.

"I thought no one who had ever known what real faith was," he said, "could ever have felt that."

"Is not faith primarily trust?" I said. "And does not very much depend on what *we have to entrust*, as well as on whom we trust it with? You could trust your wealth, and we could trust ourselves, Austin, or we think we could, to the waves, but when the vessel has to be entrusted out of our sight with what is *more than life* to us, the old assurances fail; we want another kind of assurance. Every deepening of life creates a chasm which needs a deepening of faith to fill it."

He was silent for a few minutes, then he said, "I thought it was half my own wretched unreality, and half, perhaps, the unreality of the beliefs I had multiplied with such easy exuberance around me. I seem to have accepted whatever traditional belief I thought beautiful as easily as fairy tales, and with as little real conviction."

"I think, whatever the substance of our faith is," I said, "it comes to be tested in this way one time or

another ; whether it is a forest of beautiful traditions, or a fortress of rigid doctrine."

"But mother," he said, "I do not think you can imagine, and I can scarcely bear to put into any kind of words how little in me has stood the terrible test. Not the Church, not even Christianity only ; of God, the soul, immortality, of all spiritual existence, it seems out of my power to have the slightest hold."

"I always have felt," I replied, "that scepticism would take that shape, if any, with me. If anything spiritual at all is real, Christ is real, and Christian life ; if not that, nothing."

I spoke very quietly ; and something in the calmness of my tone, I think, reassured him ; for looking up with intense earnestness in my face, he said,—

"Mother, you are not in those terrible mists now ?"

"No," I said, "if I exist, I am sure God exists, and the Lord who lived and died and dieth nevermore, and those who loved Him, living with Him."

"Then you can pray !" he said.

He took my hand and said no more.

To be able to pray, and to be sure to pray for him, meant, he knew so well, the same thing.

He sat some time silent in that very place where I had sate with my father so many years ago, on the afternoon of the Sunday of my first Communion.

My father's words came back to me, "I tremble sometimes at the weary way that may lie before you. There are many battles to be fought ;" and I remember how all the world seemed to lie before me, then, as a great battle-plain on the shores of a great sea ; or as the sea on which we are going home through a thousand perils, and all life as an Iliad and an Odyssey, yet I feared nothing.

And now I sate there trembling for my children, as he had trembled for me.

Has what I have proved of the perils and of the sustaining grace, then, deepened my terror and lessened my trust?

No! the alarms are deepened, the dangers seem greater, known, than they were unknown. The ways by which people reach the Home seem more diverse; the weapons with which the battles are fought are more imperfect than I knew, but my trust is also deepened in the Leader.

A little more of His patience, of the tarrying His leisure, has, I think, come to me, a little more sense of the greatness and wisdom of those slow ways by which He engraves the eternal lessons home.

"*Les choses ne vont pas si vite,*" we have to say again and again, as we watch the slow unfolding of His purposes, so slow, and often with such ebbs of retrogression, as they seem to us, watching the tide; only every third wave making progress, at best,—and less, at those moments of crisis when the tide is turning.

So I thought, as we sat on that rocky point together. On one side a little pool, with its anchored crimson corallines and anemones swaying about and making currents in its still depths, and the little silvery fish darting in and out in its little world. On the other the ocean, the great "world-sea," its amethyst and emerald waves heaving in their great ocean-sweeps in long perspective to the line of light which met the golden sky; heaving on, day after day, beyond that, to the new world on the other side.

Heaving with ceaseless restlessness as far as eye could see; but as they neared the sands another character came on them. No more tossing in aimless unrest, a fierce purpose seized them, and they rushed on like war-horses, reined in by a mighty hand, and retreating with a moan of revolt, but always coming up again to the attack, until at last the

ne when it was clear

the hand that had restrained was pressing them on. The word of command "Forward" had been given. Not slowly now, perceptibly, foot after foot of the sand was gained, until one bold wave dashed over the rocks into the still pool beside us. And in a few minutes more the quiet pool had become a portion of the great onward-sweeping sea.

But the tide turned in the heart of my son beside me? He said nothing to indicate it, as he gathered up the shawls and led me back to the donkey-chair.

But something in my heart says the tide has turned.

It may not sweep precisely in the direction, nor reach just the height I would choose.

I must be reverent to the Divine Presence working in our children's hearts.

Party currents may be turned hither and thither at our will.

But the tide of human love and divine faith is ruled by heavenly influences altogether beyond these.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MONICA'S NOTE-BOOK.

HOW many things of which I thought we knew the meaning, I have found during these last months, were mere empty shells to me !

So sheltered, after all, our home has been. There were wide ranges of view from its windows into life in all directions. But the widest view from a window is very different from a walk among the places themselves.

For one thing, I had no idea what luxury meant, or riches, or, perhaps, "the world."

To have beautiful things valued because they cost a great deal, because they are rare, because they are only comprehensible by an exclusive clique, in other words, because they are ours exclusively,—valued by the fact of their being *unattainable* by other people, is so entirely new to me.

We always valued things by the extent to which they could be *shared* by other people.

Again, with all our own and the boys' perversities, we honestly and naturally revered father and mother's judgment and taste, and beliefs, and thought what they cared for, probably the things best worth caring for.

But poor Mrs. Felix-Hunter, with the most single-hearted desire to be and do and like what her children think the right thing, is always consciously and painfully *fall* 'standard, and being protested against,

Mr. Felix-Hunter makes no attempt at being a standard of taste. He submits to have his house decorated, and his acquaintances chosen, reserving the right to one uninvaded room, and to occasional dinner-parties of his own selection ; and he supplies the funds with a mixture of grumbling at the amount demanded, and of satisfaction at finding it so easy to supply.

Curiously, he interests me rather more than any of them ; partly, perhaps, because he is invariably kind, and thoughtful for me, whilst the rest evidently think me an alien, and something of an intruder.

I wonder why he is so kind to me. There is a kind of reverent tenderness in his voice and look sometimes, which touches me. Perhaps it is because of my mourning, and our sorrow.

The other reason I am interested in him, is, I believe, his reality.

About the rest there is so much that strikes me as *dilettante*, by which I mean, *not* "delighting in"—*not* loving, even beautiful things for their own sake, but from some subordinate attraction of fashion, because other people say we ought to like them.

Mr. Felix-Hunter unfeignedly loves and delights in his own pursuit, which is, of course, making money.

I do not mean anything sarcastic in that. I really can quite understand that making money on a large scale may become a very interesting pursuit.

It means power, honour, space, beautiful things, absence of care ; above all, *power*, the sense that you possess a hidden resource, which, whenever you choose to draw on it, can work wonders ; an Aladdin's lamp, a Fortunatus's purse, seven-leagued boots, a flying carpet.

Of course most people die without working the wonders, without building the Aladdin's palaces, or making the voyages through the air, or pouring forth the showers of gold.

But then the delight is in the *power*, the hidden conscious power ; hidden, yet acknowledged by all, which will make people who have scarcely the remotest chance of getting a drop of your golden shower, or a diamond of your countless treasure, follow you with a curious homage, as the possessor, and even pursue the worship beyond the tomb by sending carriages in troops to your funeral.

I think the worship of money, the lowest I suppose, in one sense, we are liable to, in another, bears the strongest witness to the lofty ideal faculties of our nature, our appreciation of the future beyond the present, the unseen beyond the seen, the possible beyond the actual.

There is to me a strange romance in those announcements from the money-market which Mr. Felix-Hunter sometimes reads aloud in an unctuous voice at breakfast ; some railway across Russian steppes "down," some gigantic bridge across a Transatlantic river "up," Russia, the United States, France, Egypt, Turkey, empires older than Christianity, republics with the future of the world in their arms, all calculated and measured as forces and elements in the current of fortune which is bearing him steadily towards the millionaires.

It is all quite real, and therefore, in a sense, ideal, and it interests me.

And I suppose that pleases Mr. Felix-Hunter, whose own children are too refined and exalted for any such interest in the sources of the tide which is floating them on in luxury towards the highest places.

This is a new world to me ; a curious imitative world.

The very names of the family are records of various phases of "restoration."

Ethel the eldest daughter, and Bertrand the eldest son, were named in the days when mediævalism and the modern Gothic were prevalent.

Ethel has remained in some measure true to her

menclature. Her room is rich in Gothic brackets and shrines, oaken and gilded, with a draped curtain like an altar in the corner, and numbers of angels and saints with meek, unconscious expressions and a spiritual indifference to anatomy, and among them some copies of the real early sacred paintings, in which such quaint loveliness was the natural utterance of artists striving heart and soul after their highest, not the imitative attempt of copyists aiming at the highest by an angular bend backwards through the true aspirations of former ages.

Curiously blended with these are some later Roman developments, the newest statue of the Immaculate Mother after the latest Vatican model, and in one retired corner a picture of the Sacred Heart, after the visions of the Blessed Marie Alacocq.

So strange and dream-like it all seems to me. Because, Rome, if you think her authority divine, is, of course, quite accessible; and Ethel seems to have as little real sense of any duty of submitting personally to the authority on which all these developments are received, as if Pius IX. were a contemporary of Gregory VII.

Tremendously serious the claims of that authority seem to me, and I can quite conceive troubled consciences acknowledging it as the only perceptible refuge from Chaos, and therewith accepting the consequences. But to take the consequences, the most difficult doctrines, as a matter of taste or preference, without recognising the source, does seem to me the strangest, most eccentric complication of fashion and taste with faith.

Indeed the whole family life seems to me, sometimes, a curious kind of perpetual charade, or masqued ball—in which various people represent various centuries, and none represent themselves.

Nevertheless, Ethel and I not unfrequently find ourselves on the same side in the frequent discussions in which this family abounds, the general tide having swept

quite away from Christendom and self-denial, to the Pagan ages of beauty, and enjoyment, and self-culture.

Bertrand, the eldest son, whom I have not yet seen, seems to be the leader of this reaction.

And this, again, is so curiously reflective and dream-like.

It is not Homer and Æschylus and the grave old Greeks, with whom beauty was a necessity just as it is in God's creation, and to whom this earth, it seems to me, was a very painful riddle, and life, with all its infinite value above the shadows of death, a joy rooted in sorrow, a day born of night, and dying with it. It is Paganism through a haze of Christianity; its unfathomable gulfs softened by mists of the dawn which cannot be lost, and rendered endurable by a vague conviction, that, after all, you cannot be drowned in them; the agony of its unanswerable questions softened from despair into a mild melancholy, by the echo of the imperishable answer that has been given.

It seems to me all a dim, artificial, theatrical light, like the subdued half-tints in which the house is decorated; or a light like that first circle of Dante's *Inferno*, where the shades of Virgil and the great pagan men and women renewed in the shadowy light which never dawned nor set, a dreamy echo of the converse of earth, which could lead to no action, and no conclusion; on one side Ethel's mild reflection of the mediæval faith without its terrors and its renunciations, its submissions of will and mortifications of affection, its *Dies Iræ* and its Crusades; on the other side, this shadowy resuscitation of Paganism, without its lofty aspirations, its eager questionings, its mournful acquiescences in fate, its stern resignation to unanswerable mysteries.

I cannot say they are very gracious to me.

I will not complain, even to myself. I am not going to set up as a "femme incomprise."

Naturally I am a little lonely ; I should be lonely anywhere, now ; so many questions accumulate, and yet I feel I must not let them accumulate, now that the dear *Causeurs du Lundi* are over for ever, and there can be no periodical unburdenings.

I must unload every night as far as I can, "cast my burden" on Him who does not remove the burdens, but who does sustain those laden with them.

I am not accustomed to live in an atmosphere of suspicion.

Ethel said to me this morning as she met me dressed to go to early communion, "I did not know you cared for early Celebrations."

She said no more. But there was a curious touch of scorn in her tone, as if she thought I were an unprivileged creature intruding on some of her sacred ground.

And this afternoon, Antonia, the youngest of my two especial pupils (Antonia and Helena) brought me a Sunday paper, and said, with considerable malice (in the French sense, if not in the English), "I am afraid it has not the money article, Miss Leigh, which so interests you and papa. But perhaps it may do until that can be had."

It flashed on me that they actually think me untrue ; a complaisant creature anxious to adapt her opinions to every one !

And the idea was so entirely new to me, that I had no defence ready.

It was curious, perhaps. But I did not feel indignant, as Margaret would on my account, or amused as the Long Parliament might at seeing me suspected of a defect of militant tendency. I began to wonder what it could be in me that could have given them such an impression. I suppose it is that I do naturally always try to get at what people mean at the bottom of their various tastes and beliefs, at the kernel of truth that

it seems to me there must be in all things that interest human beings, and then to set aside the separating husks and crusts, and meet them in that common nucleus.

And when the crusts are very nearly the whole (as I fear they are here), I suppose people don't understand it, and think you are "trimming," or trifling with them and their crusts.

I don't think this strange suspiciousness can last, because I really am true. I think there is no doubt I am, and I think they must find it out one day, sooner or later. I hope it may be soon, because I don't see how I am to help them whilst they distrust me.

Antonia is the one who interests me most. There is an earnest, searching look in her eyes sometimes when I catch them fixed on me, as if, poor child, she had a dim sense that the world around her is hollow paste-board, and were now and then wondering for a moment if a solid living creature had got into the middle of it in the shape of me.

Helena is soft and fair, and tall and fully developed, with golden hair in soft waves, a languid unawake expression on her drooping eyelids, and her full lips, and a slow grace in her movements.

Antonia is a little vivacious creature, with eyes bright, wistful, and searching like a dog's, and hair dark and energetically curly, as if every hair had an individual existence.

As yet she has not adopted any century, unless it is a vigorous development of the nineteenth, among the more advanced novels of which has lain her chief literary pasture.

To-day I endeavoured to begin a course of history. I had been intending to begin with English history, because I think the first thing in history is to make the Past a continuity from the Present, to make ourselves feel

we are not looking at a fairy-tale, or a picture in the clouds, but making the acquaintance of men and women who have lived, and live still.

And to this end I think it must be better to go back from our own times, and to go out from our own country than to begin from the remotest end of time and space.

If Westminster Abbey and the Tower of London, or the High Street of Southwark, from which the Canterbury pilgrims started, are scenes of a great real drama to us, then the Parthenon and the Coliseum may become so also, and Leonidas as real as the Duke of Wellington. But if we begin with Greece and Rome, I am afraid of all becoming shadowy to us, and the Duke of Wellington being as much a dream as Leonidas.

I proposed that we should begin with Henry VIII. Mary Tudor, and Queen Elizabeth, the period of our history lately so largely unfolded. And I ventured to suggest that before beginning we should make an expedition to the Tower of London, which was the scene of so many of the events of that history.

My suggestion was not received in an encouraging way.

Helena languidly observed that she had been all over the Tower of London when she was six years old; and Antonia protested that there was more truth in one of the vigorous and original novels she was reading than in all history put together. "Of course," she concluded, "if you are to give us lessons in history, we will do them as in music or drawing or German. But you need not try to sugar them for us. I don't mind medicine, and I hate sweets."

I did feel irritated. What was I to do with these children who had got to the end of interest in everything before they understood anything? who looked on history as a lesson just to be got over, and for the most part as a lie, and on the great places consecrated by

brave lives and death, as mere "sights" for little children? The rudeness to me did not disturb me. It was the hopelessness about them.

I began to think it would be dishonest to stay and be paid, under the pretext of teaching young persons who would not learn.

All these thoughts must have flashed through my mind in a moment, for Antonia's words had hardly died away, when, from behind the large Japanese screen which kept off the draught from the school-room door, issued the eldest brother, of whom I had heard so much, but whom I had never seen, and in a quiet, slightly languid voice he undertook the reply.

"Miss Leigh," he said, "you must excuse the revolt of these barbarous young persons against your enlightened endeavours to raise them in the scale of humanity. It is of no use. Helena hasn't an ounce of brains, beyond those necessary to automatic action, and Antonia has just enough for a vivacious and emotional terrier. I assure you, as concerns them, you had better leave the Elizabethan era alone."

"Excuse me for my abrupt introduction," he added. "I was passing the door, and heard your voice, and was interested in what you said, and I could not bear that these impracticable young persons should bully you. Besides, we are cousins, which ought to be an introduction."

It was the first time our relationship had been alluded to in the family, and the first time any one had spoken a word in my defence in that house.

I looked up in his face, and shook the hand he held out cordially enough.

It was a relief.

But the expression on his face as I looked up was, I think, more than half satirical.

I imagine he thinks all women would be better with

little more brains than are necessary to make classic outlines calmly expressive up to the point of sculpture. And no doubt he considers me as absurd, and perhaps as excusable, with my Elizabethan era. as Antonia with her novels.

As he was leaving, however, he happened to glance at a half-finished sketch of mine in St. James's Park.

He paused a little while before it, and then said "I should like to show that to Gregson."

The look that passed between the two girls at this announcement amused me.

Gregson is the supreme judge of the Artistic Vehm Gericht, in which the Felix-Hunters believe; and to have it proposed that any work of art should be submitted to his approval was like a proposal among ordinary mortals to send it to the Academy, Mr. Gregson himself being, of course, far too sublime and inappreciable by the masses to be subjected to the Hanging Committee or the Philistine British public.

There was a perceptible difference in the manner of my pupils when their brother had left. It evidently implied a conviction that the oracle of the family had pronounced in some measure in my favour. This will be a great gain to me, if it gives the girls a little trust in me, and enables me to teach them.

At sixteen and eighteen there must be springs of enthusiasm undried up somewhere, for things good and true, if one could only penetrate to them.

I have seen the great Gregson himself, and I like him better than any of his worshippers. Naturally, men who work enough to be artists in almost any sense, must have more stuff in them than the clique who do nothing but talk about them.

To do any work anything like well, you must care more for it than a mere amateur. And working in any

true sense does not only give a firmness of touch to the whole being, but something of humility, even to the most exuberantly-worshipped idol of a clique.

The idol probably knows at least that it is not greater than Titian or Raphael ; that to adore it is not the sole test of orthodoxy, and that there have been and are other schools and other masters not altogether without brains.

Mr. Gregson, at all events, does evidently understand that there was a good deal in the world not contemptible before Gregson arose.

He spoke with a real enthusiasm about Sir Joshua and Gainsborough, the sweetness and nobleness of their women, and the childlikeness of their children. He said the comparison between them and Greuze was enough to explain the French Revolution.

He said this, moreover, in reference to that little sketch of mine, which Bertrand insisted on showing him, and which, he declared, reminded of Sir Joshua.

It was just a sketch in water colour, from memory, of two children I had seen near each other in St. James's Park ; one a rosy little queenly, yet child-like creature, in an elaborate toilette, seated in a miniature fairy chariot ; the other with a pathetic, pallid, sharp, little face, looking down on it, with thin, wasted arms clinging round the shoulders of a tall working man.

" You *saw* that, Miss Leigh," Mr. Gregson said.

And he drew me on to tell the story which had touched me so much.

The man who was carrying the child was tall and finely proportioned, with an erect soldierly carriage, and a grey moustache.

The little one was evidently crippled, but the worn, pale little face had a remarkably sweet intelligent wistful expression.

Some word of sympathy which I could not help speaking seemed to touch the man.

"I am not his father," he said, "but the little chap is fond of me, somehow. I live away to the east, but I manage to come two or three times a week and give him a trip. It may seem curious, but the little lad's fond of me, and he seems to take his victuals better when I come and take him out. He was as fine a little lad as could be until the mishap."

And then he told us how a careless nurse-girl had let him fall from a perambulator, and had not dared to mention it, so that when the mischief done was at last discovered it was too late to mend it, although they had taken the little sufferer to the best doctors that could be found.

Then he turned to the little one, and the two friends resumed the confidential intercourse, evidently usual between them; the man speaking in gentle caressing tones, and the child answering for the most part with approving little nods and signs.

"Have you ever seen Titian's St. Christopher carrying the infant Christ?" Mr. Gregson suddenly asked me.

I had not, and said so.

"It is strange," he remarked, "but this reminds me for some reason, of it."

It was strange; for that had been the thought in my mind as I made the sketch.

"It did seem to me just like that!" I took courage to say.

"It *was* like that," he pronounced.

I thought he meant all that I meant, and said naturally, "I wished almost to tell the child's friend what I thought. But then I thought there was another Voice that would tell him that one day, and I had no right to anticipate, or to intrude on him with my thoughts."

He looked at me with a curious mixture of pity and respect.

"The old legends are not mere legends to you," said.

"The legends?" I said. "That of St. Christopher always seems to me one of the loveliest; but more a parable than a legend. But I did not mean the legends, I meant the Gospels. The 'when saw we Thee and ministered unto Thee?' and the 'In that ye did it unto the least of these.' I felt I had no right to say a word to spoil that 'when.'"

"I see," he replied gravely. "They are indeed no mere legends to you."

But there was a sad kind of chill in his tone, and in Bertrand's look as their eyes met, which made me feel as if the Gospels were indeed mere legends to them. Then he turned back to my sketch, and said one or two kind, discriminating, critical words as to faults in the drawing of the figures.

"You should study in Paris," he said. "You should not be content with being an amateur."

"I am not an amateur," I said. "I have another profession. I am a governess."

"Miss Leigh is our cousin, and is at present teaching my younger sisters," Bertrand said.

"Your sisters ought to be grateful," Mr. Gregson said pointedly.

"I am, at all events," said Bertrand, "and as far as they have brains enough, one day no doubt they will be."

We were dropping into compliment, which is always a style of conversation in which I have no current coin at all, when to my relief Mrs. Felix-Hunter came up to us, and in rather an impressive way summoned me away to the piano.

"They are not talking enough," she said, "and I want some one to begin, and Ethel won't. She says she won't play accompaniments to other people's din."

"An indignity my mother thinks you good-natured enough to submit to!" Bertrand said.

He looked annoyed, and came with me to the

piano, and persisted in turning over the pages, which I greatly dislike; especially as he did not always do it at the right moment.

The music answered Mrs. Felix-Hunter's purpose. The confusion of tongues soon became as great as she could have wished.

However, I could hear myself, and it was Beethoven, and that is always pleasure enough for me.

"You play as if the music were your own, and you were speaking through it," Bertrand said, when I had finished.

"Of course it is my own," I said. "It is our own, is it not—the possession of us all; the treasures of the great master, who could not hear, and yet gave us all so lavishly the joy he could not share."

Mrs. Felix-Hunter seemed satisfied with my music, for she came to me again, and requested that I would go and speak to a German countess who had been attempting an unsuccessful conversation with Helena.

"I am, I confess, a little disappointed, my dear Miss Leigh," she said, as she conducted me to my countess, "that Helena did not get on better. I am particularly anxious that the girls should be equal to carrying on drawing-room conversation. You understand it is not learning or poetry that we want, but ease and grace in conversation. What people say really matters so little in comparison with the manner in which they say it. I am afraid sometimes, after all, patriotic as we are, we ought to have foreigners for foreign languages."

With which suggestive little stimulus she introduced me very graciously to the German countess.

The lady was a Saxon, and had a great deal that was interesting to tell me about one of the great national Luther festivals that had taken place, not long since, at *the Wartburg*.

In the course of conversation she mentioned, as be-

longing to her brother, the Schloss at which Dora and Dorothy are staying, with distant Schönberg connections of ours.

I ventured to ask if she had heard of them.

"Our two charming young English cousins?" she said. "Certainly; my nieces are full of them. Quite sentimental friendships in our German way!" she added. "The twin sisters, Dora and Dorothea Leigh. I don't know what perfections they don't combine; German simplicity and feeling and English energy; they are *echt Deutsch* and Shakespeare-English, and at all events *reinemenschlich* to the fullest point. Do you then know these unequalled young persons?"

I explained that they were my sisters, and on her appearance, Mrs. Felix-Hunter seemed a little surprised by the countess saying—

"Madame, you have done me an unexpected pleasure. You have introduced to me a young cousin, whose family has kept up intercourse—not without intermarriages—with our own for two hundred years. My child," she added, as she rose to leave, "you must come and see me at once, without fail. And such German, madame!" she concluded, turning to Mrs. Hunter with a torrent of compliments, which confused me quite as much as they seemed to do Mrs. Felix-Hunter.

It has been rather an eventful evening to me. It is pleasant to be—what was I going to say, "appreciated," "understood?" How the dear old Long Parliament would laugh at my euphemisms! Pleasant to have one's appreciation of oneself ratified.

Nevertheless, the recollection which abides with me from this evening is not at all pleasant, but exceedingly sad.

It is the tone of Mr. Gregson, when he seemed to wonder at my making a distinction between the Gospel histories and the legend of St. Christopher; his tone, and Bertrand Hunter's responsive look.

It seemed to reveal a great gulf, like the earth opening her mouth at the door of my tent, under my feet.

It startled me like the sudden shock of an earthquake. These two, so gentle, so reasonable, so kind to me ; and actually thinking the existence, the history of our Lord, a legend, a fable !

Have I, then, just as little really believed in the existence of unbelief as I had of death, or of the world ?

Underneath all our questionings and perplexities and scepticisms, what a rock of faith there has been !

Through all our wilfulnesses and perversities, what an atmosphere of love and service we have been breathing !

To me this first close actual contact with unbelief, unbelief in hearts so gentle, so humble, is unutterably painful. It seems not to be so much the shock of an earthquake, even more terrible than that ; like getting to the edge of the earth-atmosphere, of everything which we can breathe and which reflects the sunlight, and falling into a great blank of breathless darkness, or rather seeing others falling through it, hopelessly, unconsciously, irremediably, and we powerless to help them as we should be to make creatures of the water breathe in the air by which we live.

But no ! there is no such blank.

It is only a black, bad dream.

God *is* through all, and our not seeing Him does not banish Him. It can only banish His joy from our hearts.

What we think about anything, about the sun and the stars, or about Christ our Lord and Christianity, does not alter the facts in the very least.

That is a rest and comfort to me.

For the ultimate fact remains. God is everywhere. The universe is full of Him, and He is love ; love in all, to all.

Bertrand and I have sundry discussions, at breakfast especially, and the old vehemence, I am afraid, comes out

in a way scarcely consistent with the dignity of a guide and instructor of youth. However, with Antonia it seems to be producing the effect of convincing her I am no impostor,—no smooth, universal conformist, “facing both ways.”

To brave the family oracle seems to them to require an amount of courage it by no means demanded of me. I simply felt now and then as if I were with our own boys again in the Long Parliament.

And the things Bertrand says, and more still, the tones in which he says them, rouse me often just to that white heat of indignation in which everything else dissolves.

Especially the way he speaks of literature, and the tone in which he speaks of women.

The great poems of our modern days he sets aside as weakened and womanised by the tinge of the old legends hanging about them or pervading them. They may be useful, possibly, he concedes, at a certain stage, for children, even for boys, probably permanently for women; the literature of the rectory parlour or the Gynæceum.

Instead of these there are certain wonderful creations which often seem to me no creations at all, but a feeble reflection, or a boneless, gelatinous imitation, of the great spontaneous, bony, muscular, despairing, rejoicing, sometimes nobly-aspiring, sometimes unreadably-wicked, old pagan originals.

Guinevere, In Memoriam, the Ode on Immortality, Tintern Abbey, for women and children! and these effeminate copies for men!

How angry it makes me, on account of the literature, and on account of women!

I am persuaded that nothing, nothing in the world but Christianity, will ever do true honour to women, as women.

These Pagans, or rather these mild, reflected, *Renaissance semi-demi* Pagans, may honour motherhood,

may adore beauty, may recognise a few exceptional artist-women—Cornelia, Sappho, Cleopatra ; but women *à women*, old (or, what is worse, middle-aged), ugly (or, what is worse, plain), they will never truly honour ; and this, Christianity, in its lowest forms, does ; and therefore nothing but Christianity will ever make what Christendom means by a gentleman.

As father once showed us in Renan's "Apôtres"—

"La liberté morale de la femme a commencé le jour où l'Eglise lui a donné un Guide en Jésus.

"La femme n'a jamais eu jusqu'ici une conscience religieuse, une individualité morale, une opinion propre que dans le christianisme."

Bertrand is civil always to me ; but none of our brothers in their worst excesses of schoolboy impertinence ever treated our opinions with the quiet scorn with which he treats his sisters.

I am sure nothing but Christianity, the revelation of the Father and the Son through the Universal Spirit, can effectually and permanently keep off the spirit of caste.

Because Christianity only keeps incessantly before us the superiority of the moral, which is common to humanity, over the intellectual. Because Christianity only never loses sight of the possibility of redemption and restoration for the very lowest.

I told Bertrand to-day I would not accept compliments to my brains at the expense of Antonia's and those of women in general. That poor child has a warm heart and an open mind, whatever may be said for the rest.

Another point of Bertrand's Paganism has come out to-day. He was denying the mercifulness of hospitals. He said the Hindu Ganges was a conclusion of decrepitudes more humane and more moral.

He gave quite an heroic and pathetic picture of an affectionate Hindu family gathered reverentially around

an old grandmother, and tenderly conveying her to death by the sacred river; and contrasted it with our wilful retaining of life through agony by intoxicating the brain with stimulants, or prolonging it to imbecility in almshouses, where young lives have to be sacrificed to old. "Instead of immolating our old people to the Ganges," he said, "we immolate the young and the living to the dying or virtually dead."

"They immolate *themselves*," I said, "and live doubly by the sacrifice. Those who so lose their lives live double instead of half their true life; the heart, the soul lives,—*we* live by such sacrifices."

"It is orthodox to say so, I know," he said; "but it is difficult to see it; for instance, in the case of hospital nurses, scarcely the noblest of their race, or of women wearing out life till fifty as props of some selfish paralytic relation. Besides, if self-sacrifice is indeed the noblest thing, why don't the old people practise it? Who knows, when I come to that stage, if I might not be Christian enough to request, myself, to be taken to the Ganges instead of to the Home for Incurables?"

I argue so badly; such sophisms make me too indignant to answer them.

But the tears came into my eyes, and I had difficulty in choking them down. I thought of Miss Betsey Lovel and Miss Lavinia, and all the holy tendernesses and mellowness of character that had come out of feebleness and old age for them; and of course it would have been of no use to speak of Miss Betsey and Miss Lavinia to Bertrand.

I could only blunder out in my vehement abrupt way as I rose from the luncheon-table—

"It is quite plain that if Christianity were to become obsolete, as some people say it has, in a few years we should have infanticide instead of children's hospitals, the Ganges or suicide instead of infirmaries, and *Zenanas*

instead of homes. It seems to me that *close beyond* the edge of Christianity you fall, not into the *shallows* of Paganism, but into its *abysses*."

But in the evening Bertrand came to me and said,—

"Cousin Monica" (he insists on the whole family calling me Cousin Monica; he says it is a dignified title for me, as good as that of those curious German Protestant abbesses, and a distinction for my pupils, in the acknowledgment of relationship)—"Cousin Monica," he said (it was in the conservatory, where I was sketching a great pure translucent orchis-blossom), "you are seriously offended with me; and I am going away to-morrow."

"I am not offended with you," I said, "but I see plainly what things you say mean; and I cannot always speak as plainly as I should like, and as I think I ought, partly on account of your sisters, and partly because I am too indignant."

"It seems to me you speak plainly enough," he replied drily. "You have told me at various times that I am no gentleman, that I am a lazy *dilettante*, and that a man who breaks stones on the roads is better than a *dilettante*; and to-day that I am no better than a murderer; not an ineffective climax."

"I only made a summary of what you said yourself," I said.

"Just such a summary as the pope's Syllabus makes of the tendencies of modern thought," he said. "But don't unsay anything. I am going away to-morrow, and it will be wholesome food for meditation. You don't ask where I am going?"

"No, why should I think of such a thing?" I said.

"Certainly; only I happen to be going to Combe Regis," he replied, "where my brother Victor's curacy is, and where he says he often sees your mother and sisters. Could I take anything for you?"

I had nothing to send. I am always writing.

He went away.

But in a few minutes he came back and said,—

“You have just finished that orchis, have you not? Might I not take it to your mother, as a sign that you are not altogether without interests among us, and that you are well enough to do other things besides giving those magical lessons in history which are transforming Antonia’s life?”

I thought she would like it, and I gave it him.

Can I really have said so many uncivil things to him?

Bertrand’s appearance has certainly greatly improved my relations with my pupils, notably with Antonia.

The child actually begins to be a child, and to believe in me with an enthusiasm of girlish devotion which bewilders me.

It seems that their previous governess was a person with a shallow satirical knowledge of the world, who summarily classified Antonia as one of the daring “original” young women of a certain style of modern novels. “Vous êtes une originale qui ne se désoriginalisera jamais!” was her sarcastic verdict and reply to all Antonia’s eager questionings. And the poor child does really long to disentangle herself from all kinds of things which perplex her; and before this clever criticism, of course, all her eager, crude young thought naturally crumpled up, as under fire or frost.

Ah, if for her there could only be the old *Causeries du Lundi*!

But the only person who paid any attention to her questions was Bertrand, who replied to them with a half-contemptuous, half-compassionate, “So soon at the bars of the cage! so soon at the beginning of the questions which have no answer and no end!”

And now she turns to me, and is ready to drink in

what I believe and tell her, like a patient in fever, paring with thirst, who is suddenly transferred from some dreadful barbarous treatment of "no light, no air, and no water," to cool draughts and fresh breezes and sunshine.

We began with English history, in the biographic form, which is the only living history to me.

We took Alfred the Great, with all the biographies and notices, and original writings of his own and his contemporaries we could find.

It is curious to see the effect the discovery of the great English hero made on her.

"Cousin Monica," she said, "he actually lived! I thought he was about as real as Jack the Giant Killer. And here, under the haze and cloud of all these lovely old legends, I see him, not melting away, but growing solid, growing flesh and blood and heart and soul before me. And the whole world, even our own world, even the fashionable women in Hyde Park; and the ragged children in St. James's Park; and Westminster Abbey and the palaces and the alleys, and the Queen's guards and the British Museum, and the people I meet, seem to me to grow out of shadow-land, with him, into flesh and blood and heart and soul, into brothers and sisters. All begins to grow real to me, from the old Greeks, to Ethel and Helena, and even to Ethel's mediævalisms."

To-day we have had a most delightful holiday. Aunt Winifred came and fetched us, Antonia and me, to spend the day at Aunt O'Brien's.

By the freedom and delight of it, I felt how different is the atmosphere I have been breathing.

Aunt Winifred seemed to me actually giving out light; she made it all so warm and bright about her.

Sometimes, during the day, it made me think in a curious way of Elijah and Elisha. She loved my father

so dearly, owed everything to him, just as much as I do, and knew it, and felt the world, as I did, just a great shelterless, waterless plain, she said, without him.

And now she seems *more* instead of *less*, for his departing, as if his mantle had fallen on her.

She has a little orphanage of her own. Aunt O'Brien has allowed her to transform one of the gardeners' cottages just outside the gates into it, and Aunt O'Brien herself is quite interested, and often forgets, when any of the children are ill, that she cannot walk so far without peril.

Aunt Winifred and I had a very long quiet talk, by ourselves; for Austin was there, and he and Antonia seemed greatly interested in making researches in the library, about Alfred the Great.

I have not seen Austin so much interested in anything since our sorrow. The eager fresh delight of the young girl seemed to infect him.

And how beautiful the green world looked after London!

If imagination consists, as some one said, in giving large preponderance to the far-off in time and space over the present and near, I have certainly very little imagination.

But Wordsworth speaks of imagination as "penetrative," penetrating into the hidden depths of the near and the present.

If I have any activity of imagination, that is the kind it is of.

During these last months I have just lived in the houses and in the lives of the people around me, trying to penetrate the crusts under which there must be, and are, fountains of true human life, as much in the dullest routine of fashionable conventionality as in the most savage disorder of poverty and vice.

I have lived in Mrs. Felix-Hunter's decorated rooms,

and among her decorated people, with occasionally a glimpse among the shoeless little ones in St. James's Park, so that when I came to the garden and fields and blue far-off distances at Aunt O'Brien's, it was like a new revelation of nature to me.

Just to sit in the rock-garden and listen to the trickling of the little stream into the stone basin, and out of it, among the ferns, and to hear the cool rustle of the leaves of the great green chestnuts and the humming of the bees among the limes,—it seemed like some mystic newly-discovered music of the future,—and yet interwoven with such music from the past!

Yes; it was the sound which delighted me most; the great slow stream of silence, with the little rustlings and cooings and flutterings and water-droppings which broke it.

The absence of silence makes the beauty of the sunsets and the green glades of park and wood that we certainly see in London too theatrical, too much like scene-painting. However, if you get up early enough, you do hear the chirping of the sparrows, like the revolving of a water-wheel.

But oh! the delight it was to sit and bathe in that sea of quiet!

And by degrees Aunt Winifred grew to understand my life at the Felix-Hunters, and made me understand it better by telling her about it.

At dinner there was a delightful woman who has devoted herself to the matronship of a great workhouse infirmary, one of the many whom Christianity, at the age when beauty and youth have faded, raises, as Renan says, "to noble and worthy callings, equal to those of the most highly-esteemed men."

The conversation naturally turned on all kinds of *Christian work*, especially women's work, educational, *nursing*, benevolent.

As we drove home together Antonia was rather silent. But towards the end she said,—

“Cousin Monica, you have opened to me new worlds worth living in, and a life worth living. But, do you know, your brother said a curious thing to me to-day. He said I seemed to have an enthusiasm for Alfred, as if his life were the fountain-head of new life and the new gospel to humanity; which indeed in a great sense it has been to me. And he asked me if you had ever read the Gospels themselves with me? I said, of course, we heard them read at church, in the Second Lessons. He said they were not only Second Lessons, but a biography more interesting than that of Alfred, more detailed, more authentic, and of considerably more importance to us. Will you read them with me?”

Austin has evidently no wish that others should share his uncertainties.

We spend the Sundays and part of the week, just now, in the country-place which the Felix-Hunters rent for the summer.

This afternoon Antonia and I were sitting, reading the Gospel of St. Mark, in a cool glade of the woods, when her father came upon us in his solitary Sunday stroll.

He smiled with peculiar kindness when he saw how we were occupied, and passed on, saying he would not on any account interrupt us.

But in the evening he came and sat beside me in one of the deep bay-windows of this fine old Elizabethan house, and began to speak of mother and of our grandfather Leigh, and asked if she had ever mentioned a sister of his.

“You mean little Maud?” I said, “who was so long ill?”

“She loved ~~your~~ mother and old Mr. Leigh more than ~~any~~” he replied. And slowly, as

if with a rusted key, in a lock seldom turned, he drew out the sacred legend of the house, the loving life and early death of little Maud.

"She was too good to live, I suppose," he said, "at least, to live among us."

He couldn't tell why, he said, but from the time I came into the house I had reminded him of her—not that I was feeble or gentle as she was—I could do a thousand things she could not do. And he had seen me, he added with a smile, indignant and roused as he never saw her. But I seem, in some way, to have given him the impression she did, of having something solid and living to rest on; of having at the bottom of the heart, not a craving, but rest; of being anchored, and therefore free to sway hither and thither, in sympathy with the currents of other people's lives. And he said he wished to tell me that if I could bring any of the children to such a resemblance to Maud, he shouldn't object to it. He liked to see me reading the Bible with Antonia to-day. And he concluded with, "There is not much anchorage worth having here." Then he rose and walked away, as if he were afraid I might suggest that there *is* anchorage which would hold good for him and for us all, as well as for Maud and for me.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MOTHER'S NOTE-BOOK.

THE children are scattered far and wide now, locally and socially, carrying on their work on all kinds of levels.

The difficulties Monica encounters in her educational work seem as wide apart from those of Margaret as the New Testament from Voltaire. And yet in the New Testament age itself there were just as many contemporaneous anachronisms. The fishermen of Galilee, Pilate, the most excellent governor Felix, were on level stages of civilisation quite as varied.

Margaret has a quiet Teutonic contentedness which makes this village life very congenial to her.

She delights also in the very simple elements into which religious life and teaching are resolved in this village life; and the primitive duties to which we are recalled.

She says it is like the west-country hills and Tors, like living amidst the granite, among the roots of the world. You are not at a very high elevation, but the flowers and rock-forms are the flowers and rocks of the highest mountains.

"It is so good for one," she said to me yesterday, "to have to call things again by their plain childish names; to say 'You must not be ~~h~~' instead of 'You should not be over-seer' ~~at~~ be sulky."

instead of 'You should not indulge in morbid feeling;' to have to fight against such plain unveiled faults as idleness, ill-temper, or self-will, instead of having your enemies hidden behind sentimental masques.

And the mixture of work for hands and brain is so good for women; both not being *dilettante*, but real; for instance, cookery, not spasmodic and æsthetic, but necessary and daily, if we are to have any dinner.

The children who come in turns to scrub the rooms do get a little genuine industrial training; and Margaret's way of lowering her always soft voice, instead of raising it, when there is a din, so that they have to be quiet to hear, has told in a civilising way on the village manners.

Then we have sundry small schemes of rewards, five or six of the most exemplary taken a country walk for flower-gathering, and then the flowers inspected, not tossed idly away because of the lavishness with which they are given, but made nose-gays of, and afterwards brightening the cottage windows or some sick-chamber for many a day; and now and then sent in hampers to our old parishioners in the dingy streets. It is like giving the children an Aladdin's lamp, to show them that the flowers on every bush and bank *are* jewels and priceless treasures; that what we need to lead us into a magic world of delights is not the rubbing of the lamp, but the anointing of our eyes to see, and the inspiring of our hearts to love and serve.

And the mere teaching of pretty, instead of senseless childish games, is something; "rhythmic movements," to speak pedantically, have their share in civilisation.

Margaret tries to make the children's pleasures just open out of the common things around them; and especially she tries to make them think of animals, not as enemies to be entrapped, or slaves to be got the most out of, but, according to St. Francis D'Assisi's "*Canticum Solis*," as dumb or infant children of the great family.

May and Dot help in this. And she has actually succeeded in establishing, even among some of the boys, a "party," at least, in favour of the protection rather than the destruction of birds' nests.

We heard, the other day, of a Breton schoolmaster who established a society among his boys for the protection of small birds, with coronations and processions; but Margaret thought it would be better, here, to take our English parliamentary method, and govern by party; in other words, to work towards a good public opinion.

Meetings, coronations, speeches of approbation, she thought likely rather to shame and scare than to attract English boy-nature.

On the other hand, the disposition to pet and cherish animals is as inherent in boys, she thinks, as the disposition to tease; and she thinks, in the least things as well as the greatest, the surest method is to call out the good and conquer the evil with it.

In this mission to the animal world, May takes her full share. Her faith in the goodness of Dot has opened her sympathies to all the dumb creatures; and May's small weekly revenues go largely in the purchase of Pictorial Animal Worlds, wherewith the cottages are freely decorated.

So that May has her "mission," a "flower" and "animal" mission; and also in that important region of the child-world, the hours of play.

I wish, sometimes, Monica and her pupils could be transported for a time into this natural life of ours. They are too deep in imitative Paganisms and imitative mediævalisms, and all kinds of literary and artistic over-subtleties. Lady Katharine was bemoaning similar difficulties to-day as she drove me to Combe Monachorum.

"What is to be done to give these over-civilised young women the counter-development of real work of hand and arm?" she said.

"If they marry and have children of their own," said, "that scarcely does it. They never even have the privilege of washing and dressing their own babies, or carrying them out to walk, or doing the real nursing for them in their childish sicknesses."

"Well, two threatened evils may encounter and neutralise each other," she concluded. "We are menaced in a directions with a famine of domestic servants. And we are in the depths of a famine of wholesome domestic work for gentlewomen. Perhaps the two will correct each other."

Victor Hunter brought his brother Bertrand to-day with a drawing of Monica's, a sketch of a stately white orchis, so pure and individual, it seemed as if it must have a baptismal personal name of its own, to distinguish it from any other flower in the world.

He did not say much about Monica. He seemed to care more to listen to Margaret and May, and determine to individualise us all, down to Dot.

He observed parenthetically that his youngest sister Antonia is enthusiastic about Monica and English History. And he said to Margaret, in the garden, she told me, apropos to something she said about the Bible lessons to the children, that all our family seemed to have a kind of *imperial* way of speaking of the Christian religion; instead of half apologizing for adhering to it, as so many more or less believing people do, we seemed to think, he said, the apologies should come from the other side. An *apologia pro vita mea* seemed to us natural enough, but an *apologia* for the Church or the Bible quite out of date, after these eighteen hundred years.

He came back after he had taken leave, and asked if it would be a liberty to ask to keep Monica's orchis a little while longer; he rather wished, he added with some hesitation, to show it to his friend Gregson.

And he concluded with a little tender compliment to me.

He said my name and my father's had had a kind of legendary sacredness to him from his infancy. His own mother and Victor's, Mr. Felix-Hunter's first wife, had been a great friend of his Aunt Maud's—our darling little sufferer Maud—and he remembered, to this day, the kind of voice in which she used to say, "Grace," and "Mr. Leigh." He included, also, I could feel, another name, which he did not express.

I am rather glad those two young men are not sons of the present Mrs. Felix-Hunter; not that Monica has said anything disloyal about the mistress of the house she lives in; but I have an impression.

"Imperial, not apologetic:" is that the tone then in which our children seem to others to represent Christianity?

Apologies ought, certainly, to be out of date, after the Christian Church has existed on earth for eighteen hundred years.

But meantime how is the tide going with my Austin?

Letters from Walter and my brother Harry.

Harry writes enthusiastically of Walter; he says something like what Bertrand Hunter said, that he unfurls his Christianity as simply and naturally, when occasion comes, as his ship her English flag.

Walter writes rather less fervently of his uncle, although he warms towards the close. He says Harry sometimes makes him think of an advertisement he once saw of a "domesticated gentlewoman," as if a gentlewoman were a kind of wild beast, needing to be tamed. Uncle Harry seems thoroughly tamed. The establishment is small; and the babies pervade it in a fashion which he supposes is half colonial, and half French, and Uncle Harry ac-

ce"

sery offices as a matter of course.

But he says he leads a most busy life, the house open to all people in trouble, and Uncle Harry is domestic oracle with all the negro aunties.

His Aunt Thérèse, he says, is charming in her way, and adores her husband, but apparently has no idea that the life he leads is not the most natural and idyllic in the world for an English gentleman. But Harry's life is limited to making drawings for the babies, which elder babies, even already, begin to neglect for art their own.

But, nevertheless, Walter's verdict is that Uncle Harry is more of a true man and Englishman than ever before.

He says Harry does not ask many questions about the old home, but he has a way of drawing one on to talk of it; and then a quite different expression sometimes comes over his face, as if the *whole* of Uncle Harry were looking out of the eyes, for a minute. It is an expression that quickly passes; but Walter says, when it has passed, in the quiet that follows, for a little while, he has now and then observed how worn and aged Harry's face is.

Dear old brother, what I would give to see him again!

But Walter says he never breathes a word of any wish for a return to England.

Letters from Dora and Dorothy.

Dorothy has become enthusiastically German, the whole nation becoming an army for defence of the fatherland, smitten into unity in a moment by the threatened attack, the grandest idea and the noblest sentiment in the world; sees no perils in the military spirit; thinks it the most ennobling carrying out of self-sacrifice into every corner of every fireside; thinks German domestic life, with its blending of romance and homeliness, the most perfect ideal; and that the whole range

feminine excellence is embraced in the destiny which includes *Braut* and *Hausmutter*; believes all our English "woman questions," and the whole of what is *dilettante* among our young men, would be settled, or would vanish without difficulty, if we could revert to the true old Teutonic type.

Dora is more composed, has a little lingering fondness for the comparative position held by Englishwomen, not *Brauts*; and reserves a corner of her heart for the French connections they are to visit.

Monica's pupil, Antonia Hunter, has been spending a few days here with her brother Victor.

She speaks with a young girl's enthusiasm of adoring friendship of my child.

Ah, was it then for some good, dimly perceptible even already, that the old home was broken up?

The perfect ripened fruit, we know, is not the end in itself, but is, after all, only an envelope of seeds, which must fall, and be scattered, and become, themselves, not fruit only, but roots of fruit-bearing trees, bearing fruit "whose seed is in itself."

One little hint that this child Antonia dropped has given me the greatest comfort.

She said to me quietly one day that of all their reading together nothing interests her so much as an hour she and Monica spend alone in Monica's room in the evening, reading the Bible.

And she says it was Austin who first suggested that they should begin to read the Gospels together; my Austin, who yet dares not say to me that he has regained his grasp on the old truths!

There is much talking on various sides now, in depreciation of the value of the Holy Scriptures. On one
ling criticism, or rather terror of

other people's criticism; on the other, a vague feeling that between the Divine words and our feeble minds we need some softening or interpretative medium; on one side a suspicion that the Old Book is too uncertain and imperfectly human to be definitely and authoritatively a divine message to people with claims to high culture; on the other, that it is too awfully and mysteriously Divine for common eyes to penetrate.

"Don't send us to a book," some people say, "to a dry, ancient Scripture; the living Spirit inspires humanity still."

"Don't venture to lay open the sacred oracles to an ignorant private interpretation," others say. "There is a Church, a living authoritative body, which existed before the Book, which alone preserved the Book, and which alone can securely unveil it."

Truth, of course, there is on both sides.

We do need the living Spirit who inspired the authors of the Book to inspire the life of the readers now.

And we *have* the Christian life which existed before the Book, to interpret and to diffuse it still.

The truth of God is not distributed by lifeless machinery; it never was, and it never will be.

But the Book itself, *in itself*, seems to me the answer to both these depreciations.

I believe we may safely leave the arguments against its universal adaptation and circulation to refute each other.

One of the objections, however, which makes me most indignant is, that it is not suitable for young people.

It certainly was not written for young girls, or by young girls. But why is it that against this English literature of ours which has sprung up around it, is brought just the opposite objection, that it is apparently written with a prudish sense that there ought to be nothing *unfit* for young ladies to read?

Why is it that to the literature of all others moulded by the Bible, foreign countries come for the literature pure enough to put into the hands of all?

The consuming fire of its divine purity scorches the evil things in humanity, which it does not hesitate to recognise as existing.

It does depict the world as a great hospital; but pathological science in its pages never takes the place for a moment of the art of healing. It shields all who read it reverently from the contagion of the sins it describes, by always making us feel that sin is not a necessity of humanity, but its disease, and by enlisting our whole sympathies on the side of health and healing.

The human imperfections it presents for criticism to investigate are just the proofs it is not *only* human, not a rigid construction of diplomatically-cautious theologians, but a growth of divine thought through human hearts.

And as to its requiring interpretation, which of the commentaries or confessions written to explain it does not contain for the next generation a thousandfold more difficulties to be explained than the Book itself?

It is, indeed, not a folding up and veiling of Divine truth, but an unfolding and a revelation.

I believe, in my inmost heart, it is the strongest bond of our English Christian and social life.

It has a common interest for men and women on every level of rank and culture. It is common ground between every section of our Church, and our nonconforming sects. It is a common prayer-book, a common hymn-book, a common education.

It is as comprehensible and as dear to the slumbering passive minds of the old village people here, as to the world-sharpened wits of our London parish.

Indeed, I believe people exaggerate the differences **really existing** between those for whom the Bible is the **vision and morals**. For in the Bible all

theology is moral, and all morals are theological ; a combination which, when steadfastly persisted in, does I think, more than anything to soften mere external sins.

If we believe that the root of sin is selfishness, God is love, and therefore that love is holiness ; that Atonement is God restoring us to Himself by the sacrifice of Himself ; that salvation *begins* in the forgiveness which reconciles us to God, and *means* the overcoming of sin which separates from God, what room is there for deep inward separation ?

Sweet it is to me to think that Margaret is teaching these little ones the sacred words, which will come to them, as I have seen, and see daily, in long hours of sickness and on dying beds, with the familiarity which makes them steal quietly like music into the heart ; the mind is too wearied to grasp anything new ; and my Monica is doing the same in that luxurious home

CHAPTER XXIX.

MONICA'S NOTE-BOOK.

BERTRAND HUNTER has come back from Combe. He seems to understand something of what mother is. Not that he said much about her. But there was a tone in the few words he did say which I have not felt in his way of speaking about any one else.

He also quoted Arthur Clough's "Highland Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich" in reference to our Margaret, whom he seems greatly to admire.

I think he said his brother Victor pointed it out:—

"How the old knightly religion, the chivalry, semi-Quixotic,
Stirs in the veins of a man at seeing some delicate woman
Serving him, toiling for him and the world,
Milking the kine in the field, like Rachel watering cattle,
Or with pail upon head, like Dora, beloved of Alexis,
Comely with well-poised pail over neck arching soft to the shoulders,
Comely in gracefullest act, one arm uplifted to stay it;
Or doing household work, as many sweet girls I have looked at,
Needful household work, which some one, after all, must do,
Needful, graceful therefore, as washing, cooking, and scouring;
Or, if you please, with the fork in the garden uprooting potatoes."

We do not have so many discussions as we used, which is almost a pity, because it does not give me the opportunity of showing that I can keep my temper, which *is* a little difficult to me, when I think people are
so "had so determined to do.

"after Mr. Hunter had

left, when we were dispersing to go to the school-room that he thought of going into business; he believed approved of men being in business.

I thought at first he was alluding to the scornful suspicions Antonia had entertained as to my simulation of sympathy with her father about the money-market; and I felt myself crimson, at the recollection of the injustice and said hastily I knew very little about business men of business. Then, he corrected himself, as if I thought I was displeased at his claiming my interest in his affairs.

"I know," he said in a chilled tone, "your family have kept on higher levels, in every way. But I think it would be in your mother's way to help any one who was creeping up even the first step."

"I did not mean that," I could not help saying. "My father thought nobly-conducted commerce the pioneer and protector of freedom of all good kinds, and the forerunner of truth of all kinds; and he said the great employers of labour are the true successors of the great feudal lords."

"I understand. He thought to be makers of things and therefore masters of men, a nobler calling than to be turners-over of money?"

"Of course, in the lower forms in which we came in contact with it in his parish that was obvious," I said. "A shoemaker's for instance, is, of course, a worthier calling than a pawnbroker's."

"Or than that of a painter of sign-posts, or of valentines, or, still more, of a valuer of other people's sign-posts or valentines," he said smiling. "Well, I think being a shoemaker on our level; shoemaker and blacksmith to the great iron horse. My uncle has offered me a share in his engineering works. And I half think accepting it."

I felt pleased.

"Although I have to begin by a regular apprenticeship in the workshops," he said, "really learning the practical work of the trade."

I liked that, and I said so.

"You will still shake hands with me, then, Cousin Monica," he said, "even as a grimy son of toil?"

"Even?" I said.

"You think it would be step upward, instead of downward?"

Of course I do. Did he not tell me he has been doing nothing all his life but talk about other people's work; unless it might be, now and then, buying it?

And so he has gone to the north.

All other interests and delights grow pale to me, compared to the delight of watching this new interest and joy in the Bible opening to Antonia.

All these things, all this old, eternal, ever-fresh divine light dawned so gradually on us, or at least on me, that the first thing I was conscious of was not so much the light as the mists, the earth-born smoke and fogs, which obscured it; not so much the truths as the perplexities; why, being there, the light did not banish the darkness; why, having been so long there, there were so much cold and darkness left, so much groping and stumbling in the darkness still? But to Antonia it is the light, the Sun itself, which is consciously, the new revelation. And, to watch her mind and heart opening to it, is like living in the primitive ages of Christianity; better than watching the unfolding of the truest poet's May that ever flooded the woods and fields with its wealth of green and flowers.

I scarcely think it can be common in any English families; but to Antonia the Bible seems really an unknown world. Or, which is worse, the words seem to *have had* surface familiarity, not the

dear familiarity of sacred early associations, but vulgarising familiarity of acquaintance without intimacy.

They have family prayers in the morning; but Hunter has not time for reading the Bible, except Sunday mornings, when he reads a psalm. One of the governesses, indeed, used to insist on the Daily Lessons without diminishing the daily tale of bricks, which tended to make the daily lessons as dry as the straw Pharaoh's taskmasters refused to furnish.

Meantime, Antonia was always hearing dropping conversation of various kinds; on one hand, a virtuous withdrawal of the Holy Scriptures behind an ornamental screen of religious books and formularies; on the other, suspicions as to their being Holy Scriptures at all, suggestions of bad arithmetic, bad history, bad astronomy and geology, and perhaps not much better theology; their resemblance to the mythical legends of other nations and religions; which had the effect of simply causing her to cease reading them, either for daily devotion—for which purpose she substituted various literary manuals, or as the historical sources of our religion. All quite vague, scarcely acknowledged to herself, but with the effect anything but vague. To her “the oracles were dumb.”

“No voice of weeping heard, and loud lament.”

No sighing of the lost voices through “haunted spruce and dale,” no

“Drear and dying sound,
In consecrated earth,
Or on the holy hearth.”

Unnoticed, unconsciously to her, the sacred voices ceased. But they had ceased. There was “no voice nor any to answer.”

Happily for her, the rush of the terrible questions which she had brought to her, but which she had not yet come to; when the heart cuts a path through the world, wounds itself like the unanswered priests of old, cry-

to the god that slumbers, or is not, for the fire that never comes.

It was merely a lifelessness, an absence of meaning, of any centre to gather human beings and human thoughts together; a dull absence of hope and aim and trust. As yet, all slumbering and passive in the slumber of her heart. But how terrible it might have been, if the silence had waked her, as it sometimes does, instead of the living voice!

For this silence, this dulness, this absence of hope, meant nothing less than the absence of God.

No assault had been made on her faith; she had not been driven from position to position. It had been merely a noiseless withdrawal of the elements in which faith lives.

But the result was quite definite.

It was a vacuum.

She did not feel sure enough about the possibility of communication with anything Unseen and spiritual to seek communion with a life above her own.

She did not feel sure enough of the fact, or of the possibility of any manifestation of the spiritual, to care to examine the records of such manifestations.

She had an impression that such an examination would end in making her give up going to church, like Bertrand. And she knew this would scandalize the household, whilst Bertrand himself would probably not think it feminine.

She was not in any distress on account of all this. Life, certainly school-room life, and she thought especially fashionable life, for grown-up people, seemed to her for the most part dull and uninteresting; but it was probably in the nature of things that it should be so. Other people got used to the nature of things, and probably she might.

Besides

various exceptions always

conceivable at sixteen. Her novels told her of possibilities of a vivid life, of finding some wonderful absorbing destiny of love and rapturous mutual comprehension, of perfect understanding and being understood when the oracles would indeed not be "dumb," but the whole world would become but a "consecrated earth," a home, a "holy hearth," and she the priestess of that consecrated life and that divine hearth-fire.

Or at the worst she might become the self-sacrificing heroine, on the tragic side of the story, and end with the self-immolation which is its own reward, especially when it only comes in the last chapter.

To about this state Antonia had arrived when she came to Mr. Hunter's.

The first thing (she told me) that interested her in me was her perception that to me, at least, life was not *dull*. Whatever it was, not dull. Thank God, that was a word not known in our early vocabulary; whatever else was lacking or superfluous, dullness was not in our home, dullness in any of its translations, fashionable *ennui* or religious "dreariness." Father would never let us sing one of the hymns which tell God they find this world a "dreary" wilderness.

And sorrow has made this *less* possible to us, I think than before. These piteous little wettings of your feet and bemoaning yourself, by shallow waters of small dependencies, are not to be ventured on in a sea which descends sheer from the shore to the depth no line has ever fathomed.

However this was what Antonia thought she saw in me.

She did not attribute it to religion. She thought I had probably a bright temperament; and she thought it might be partly due to poverty, making pleasures rare and fresh, and making work really necessary.

In which she was in a great measure right. At first

she told me, moreover, she did suspect me of "pretending" a little, especially in the matter of her father and the money-market.

But she said she envied me from the first week I was in the house ; she hated me and admired me alternately, but always envied me for the possession she thought I had.

She told me she concluded, on the whole, that the chief ingredient was poverty ; and she wished sometimes there might be a revolution, or a commercial crisis, or anything which would make work a necessity for her.

Whatever else would make it worth while for her to take trouble to multiply the mediocre art, music, painting, sculpture, already superabounding in the world? What difference would it ever be to any one whether she knew two languages or seventy? And as to philanthropic work, one half of the charitable people seemed to her to think that the greatest mischief was caused by the indiscreet labours of the other half ; so that an armed neutrality seemed the safest ground as to philanthropy ; and armed neutrality unfortunately furnished little occupation.

She was at this stage when Bertrand first came home, and something in that conversation with him and Mr. Gregson seems to have given her thoughts another direction, just a glimpse of a possibility that these "fresh springs" which she thought she saw in me might be from a real living fountain within, not from some unattainable external reservoir inaccessible at least to her.

Moreover she began, she said, to *love* me, to have a delight and appreciation, and I know not what, for another human being which she had never felt before, and which is, itself, a fresh spring of life.

Her novels had not spoken of this great human joy as coming in that form. But to Antonia it did come in the form of a devoted friendship.

She had never read our beloved Jeremy Taylor Essay on Friendship as being "the greatest bond in the world"—"the abiding love in all love," "the marriage of souls."

And she had read and heard a great deal of shrewd and satirical reprehension of school-girl attachments, and was in wholesome fear of being, or being thought, sentimental. But it did so happen that the child so loved me. She thought me true, disinterested, good, and just that unutterable *something more* which mysteriously binds heart to heart.

Then came our study of Alfred the Great.

The past rose before her as a new wide world of real life. History became a reality for her.

The little fragment of time and of the world in which we happen to live ceased to be a disconnected ice-block floating in a foggy unexplored ocean, and revealed itself as the outlying shore of a great continent of human life or rather, perhaps (as it now appears to me), as a little visible thinly-peopled island, separated by a narrow strait from the great populous mainland which is invisible, but populous with those who have emigrated to it from this island shore. It was about this time that we spent the first day at Aunt O'Brien's.

She came back full of Austin's suggestion that we should read the Gospels together.

A hope dawned on her that, at the heart of this new real world of history, she should find a sacred history more real than any other.

What if, after all, the crowning height of that great mainland of the past should be crowned with the Holy City coming down out of heaven from God?

What if, after all, she should find there the river which makes glad the city of God, and should find these were the living springs which she thought kept my heart fresh?

Then she went to stay a few days with her brother Victor, at Combe.

And in my mother and Margaret she saw again (she said) that steady purpose and fresh interest in life, which she had first seen in me, as if things were done by a *command*, and with the certainty of not being in vain.

Especially, this struck her in our mother, because it was evident that her life had been shattered and shaken to its foundations, and yet that the foundations were not shaken; that she was not working from a partly-spent impulse, but from a living motive, still.

"I felt," she said, "that you had all One to serve who cannot be pleased except with our very best, but who will never scorn our best because it is so poor. I cannot tell how else to express what I mean. I felt you were really like the disciples in the Gospels, with a living Master."

This she told me to-night; and I think nothing in my life ever made me so thankful and glad.

If it can indeed be possible that something of Christian life amongst us has made the Gospel histories credible to Antonia, on the other hand, the new life which streams from the Gospel histories day by day visibly into her heart makes them seem doubly living to me.

So it is that growth by Divine law and through Divine life means not merely the growing thing itself becoming stronger, larger, fuller, but reproduction, multiplication, tenfold, a hundredfold, a thousandfold.

Yes, this that I am seeing in Antonia must be conversion, the turning of the whole being from self to God. Not a reviving of early impressions. Something altogether new, as in the early days of Christianity.

The Gospels which began to interest her as the most real and wonderful of histories, have become to her some-

thing infinitely more; not only the Manifestation of the Perfect Ideal Life in the Past, but the Revelation of Life-giving Life in the Present; the manifestation and the gift of Eternal Life now.

On us it dawned so slowly; we never remember the first grey streaks breaking from the night. But never have I seen anything like the joy of this dawning of the light of God, of God, Himself the Light, on a soul.

All the beautiful things in the world which picture the dawn, spring, the rainbow on the dark cloud, the opening of a flower, seem as if this glorious dawning of Himself on a human soul must have been in the thought of God as the end and crown of all when He created these visible types.

No wonder there is joy in heaven among His angels when they see it!

No wonder heaven is heaven, if this joy is continually springing up afresh, as it must be there.

No wonder God takes His own to share it, when the fragment of their service here is done.

Ah, I begin to have a little glimpse of the blessedness the ever fresh springing joy, to which our father is gone.

For what is it?

"The Universe is full of God," she says, "and God is love. God is love, and loves me. And I love Him and He knows it. And He tells it me a thousand times a day, in every page of the Bible, in every kindness that comes to me from every one, from everywhere in every fresh joy that springs up in my heart. And I tell it Him over and over, in prayer and hymn, and in silence beyond utterance; and I know He loves me enough to care to hear again and again that I love Him! Did he not ask St. Peter three times?"

"And I am only at the beginning, at the very beginning of it, and there is Infinity to learn, Infinity of Love and Eternity to learn it in."

"The universe is full of love, Monica; and the measure of what the love means is Gethsemane and the cross."

"No wonder that the prodigal could not finish the little speech he made in the far country, on the father's breast.

"We make so many wise and elaborate little speeches, Monica, in the far country. But when once He finds us, the speeches, the words, the thoughts, are all dissolved away. *The father fell on his neck and kissed him.* That is what the father *did*. It does not say what the reconciled child did. '*This my son was dead, and he is alive again, he was lost, and is found. It is meet we should make merry and be glad.*' That is what the father *said*. It does not say what the son said. I suppose he did and said nothing, Monica. He just laid his head on the father's bosom, and felt all through him the father's joy."

"Oh, Monica," she said, "never more to have to choose for oneself, to live for oneself! to have a Master to surrender one's whole will and life to!

"Never more to drift! To be piloted.

"Never more to wander aimlessly! To be led; to follow!

"To follow not steps, but a Voice; not a law, but a Lord. To be a servant to the very height and depth of one's being, just because one is first a child, a reconciled forgiven child. To know that actually, constantly, He will take the least services we render any one, as done to Him.

"To have everything become ours, everything beautiful in everything, everything good in every one, because we are Christ's, and He is the Light of the World, the source of all beauty and goodness. Free of the whole universe, just because we are freed from self, from the wretched bondage of having to live as if we

own, to build our own life, and do our own work, and find our own way, instead of living by His life, and doing His work, and taking His way."

This morning we went, Antonia and I, for the first time, to the Holy Communion together.

"How wonderful it is," she said, "when the living waters come, to find the channel already there, the prayers and hymns through which for ages the life has flowed! Words which once we thought we had fathomed and exhausted, we find deep and wide beyond our conception to receive and swallow up all the adoration and delight we can pour into them.

"Ah, Monica, it seems as if, could the life only be deep enough, the faith in the Ever-living, Who is the Life, all separating controversies must vanish.

"It seemed to me to-day, as if our Lord Himself were there, having given Himself for us, now, then and there giving Himself to me, while I offer and present my whole self, soul and body, to Him."

And on our return the elder sister Ethel met us, and welcomed us quite tenderly, and kissed us both, me for the first time.

"It seems," Antonia said to me, "as if until now I had never truly loved any one before. I seem to wake up in a new world of human as well as of Divine love to have received a hundredfold, 'father, mother brothers, sisters,' even here."

Wonderful it is to stand and watch this glad and solemn glory of dawn in a human heart.

Heaven, indeed, it must be on the heights where they are always seeing this dawn, and where they know the solemn gladness of the perfect Day into which it shall deepen.

CHAPTER XXX.

WINIFRED'S MOAN-BOOK.

"My heart is at the secret source
Of every precious thing."

ALL day that deep song of joy has been in my heart. I had been living in twilight, and I did not know it. How many of us are living in twilight, and do not know it?

And how this living in twilight must hinder the manifestation of the Light of the World to the world, the Light in which we should live and may live every moment!

If the whole Church could wake up to live in the full light of joy and holiness which is hers, it seems as if, naturally, inevitably, the whole world must wake up to see that the Sun has risen, that the Lord has risen indeed; and the Day of God would be here.

For "YE are the Light of the World," the Source of all light has said;—not the words I speak, not even the record of Me which My disciples shall write; but YE.

Can it really be true that He said so? I must look again to be sure of the words; they seem so all-explaining, so glorious, so marvellous.

"I am the Light of the World," He said.

That is not difficult to comprehend.

"But YE are the light."

Is that, indeed, no mystical exaggeration, but eternal truth, in the sober profound words of Him who never overstrained a precept or a promise?

In the same sermon He says, "YE being evil."

No minimising in His teaching; no minimising either of our sin, or of our possibilities of victory.

And we, blundering, stumbling disciples in all ages, all lands, of all professions, what have we been doing?

Some of us declaring that one or another external ecclesiastical government is the light of the world; some of us that the light of the world is a Book.

But, through it all, His light has never failed to shine. Through the thickest veils of ecclesiastical construction it has shone. Since He rose, the world has never been left in total darkness. But why has not the world itself, by this time come to shine translucent, in total universal, all-penetrating light?

Through the thickest screens of ecclesiastical construction it has shone; in the Divine Book, the Word of life, it has always shone, though held forth by the feeblest and most trembling hands.

Still the deeper manifestation remains.

"YE are the Light of the World."

The Incarnate Word speaks primarily through the flesh, the human nature which He took on Him. God manifest in the flesh speaks now most manifestly in the flesh.

He who tabernacled among us visibly once, tabernacles now visibly among us through those in whom He dwells; in patient sufferers, in hearts that love, in lives that serve; in the poor who are rich in faith, in the rich who are poor in spirit.

It is no new thing, not new even to me.

But old truths live afresh in me.

Maurice lived it before my eyes. Grace lived it daily by day. I have always believed it.

And yet now it seems as if I had only half believed. I never believed in any Saviour but a Saviour from sin ; I never dreamed of any salvation as worth the name but a salvation from sin.

Yet now everything, every word of the Bible, every relation of human life, everything in nature, glows, becomes translucent ; old familiar hymns, the Creeds, the Church Services, the Holy Communion, shine and glow through and through with a new glory and meaning to me.

This revivifying of old truths, or, perhaps, I should rather say of my heart to embrace them, has come to me through a great gathering of Christian men and women for many days together, waiting on God in prayer and praise, and searching of the heart by His Spirit, and surrender of the will to Him ; and I bless Him in the depths of my soul for it.

I did not know I was living in twilight. How are we to know how imperfect twilight is, except by its deepening into dawn ? If twilight could remain stationary for a few days, I suppose we should get to think it was all the daylight to be had, and read our Scriptures, and do our work as well as we could by means of it.

I cannot say the phrase "higher life" best expresses this to me.

It seems to me simply "the life"—the normal, natural, child-like Christian life, we *all* ought to be living, not a few of us ; we ought to be living *always*, and not now and then ; the life which, thank God, not a few do live always.

To walk in the light is surely the simple natural order, it would seem almost the inevitable order, of Christian life.

Our Sun is not a revolving light, alternately light and dark. Why should our path be through alternate streaks of light and shadow ?

It is simply, I think, the translation of the past and the future into the present, in other words, of *then* and *by-and-by* into *now*; of time, with its alternations and its decadences, into the Eternal, with its ever-living youth.

The tenses of Christian life are not mere narrative tenses. They are perfect and present. "Thou *hast* : *deemed* us to God by Thy blood, and hast made us kin and priests."

That is, we *are* redeemed, and do belong to God, now; we are not our own, but His. Dominion over sin is not a vague promise in the future, but a possibility and possession now, in and through Him who lives in the hearts of those who trust Him. The consecrated, sacrificial, sacerdotal life is not for a future age or a limited number, but for the whole Church, every moment, now and for ever.

It is simply the translation of possibilities into actualities. As Coleridge said, "To restore a commonplace truth its first uncommon lustre, you need only translate it into action. But to do this you must have reflected on its truth."

That is, when the Master says, "Abide in me," we do not say not, vaguely, "Enable me to abide in Thee," but "I do abide in Thee;" not, "I hope I shall;" far less "I fear I shall not," but now at this hour "I do," and his response is, "*He that abideth in me, and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.*"

The beneficences and endurances and sacrifices of the true, obedient life are not constructed painfully as works, but spring forth naturally as fruits.

As Alexander Knox said, from the sentence in the Litany, "'That we may diligently live after thy commandments,' which is much, we should advance to the following petition for 'Increase of grace, to hear meekly Thy word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit,' which is more."

It is not, "Without me ye can do little," but, "Without me ye can do nothing."

Not, "That you may have a little broken, interrupted joy," but, "That my joy may abide in you, and that your joy may be full."

When it says, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption," believe it, and look up and cry, "Abba, Father."

When it is written, "The law of the Spirit of life has made us free from the law and sin and death," believe it, make "an act of faith" in it, as the old devotional books say; and live as those who, being redeemed, are not necessitated to sin, need never say, "I am so weak, I cannot help it;" because having confessed that we are not only a little crippled, but utterly weak and disabled, we cling to Him who is not merely great and strong, but Almighty Strength, our strength and our shield, for ever.

When we read, "Christ *in us* the hope of glory," look up and say, "True; all but incredible; but if Thou sayest it, *true!* Thou art in us."

And then, if we continue, *as* we continue beholding Him, the Spirit who manifests Him will reveal depth after depth in Him, the Babe in the manger, subject to his parents, coming not to be ministered to, but to minister; in the agony saying, "Thy will be done;" whilst the nails were being driven into the hands that had touched the leper and blessed the children, praying with self-abandoning love for His torturers; praying so as to be answered; obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

This is the Christ Who lives in Christians. This is the life which through His disciples He will manifest to the world.

This is the only argument by which the Church ever will or ever has overcome the world.

of Christ in Christian men and

Holy, immaculate, patient Lamb of God, to each one of us, can it indeed be possible thou hast committed this, even this? Tremendous responsibility, unutterably blessed possibility! To manifest Thee.

Can it indeed be true that thou hast not only promised, but commanded this? For thy command seems to me, if possible, even a stronger assurance than thy promise.

“The secret source of every precious thing.”

Living close to that well of life, nay, more—why should we hesitate to say it?—with that well of water, that secret source, actually “springing up in our hearts” (the woman of Samaria, to whom that promise was freely and immediately made, was surely no exceptional saint), how many precious things seem revealed to us!

My eyes seem opened like Hagar’s to see so many wells around us in the desert.

It seems to me as if I had never before understood how many devoted and rejoicing lives there are around me; lives really altogether poured out like the precious ointment on the feet and on the head of the Lord.

Yes, there were two alabaster boxes of precious ointment poured on Thee; one on Thy feet, one on Thy head!

One from the forgiven penitent, with floods of tears, in a silent rapture of new-born gratitude; the other from the heart of long familiar love, from the disciple who had chosen the good part, and sate at Thy feet so long, had understood Thee and been understood by Thee, loving Thee, Thee Thyself, beyond all Thy gifts, knowing Thou carest for the sacrifice of ourselves more than for all our service. One poured in depths of grateful humiliation on Thy feet; the other in ecstasy of adoring love on Thy head.

Both lavished: one from the broken vase. And I see

the same, surely the eyes that watch to welcome the least ministry of love, see the same,—now, around us in this England—now.

In countless quiet Christian homes, in hospitals, in infirmaries, in loving ministries among the fallen and the suffering, through all shades of religious conviction, through all varieties of natural character, from all grades of society, and in all forms of ecclesiastical order; I see them, not only through the softening mists of the Past, but now, close around me now, pressing to Thy feet, pouring out the life, the heart, in unreserved consecration to Thee!

The olden days of Galilee and Olivet are for ever being renewed. Of their substance, of their life, from the manger to the cross, along the common, toilsome path, along the solitary way of agony, the women minister to Thee.

So short a time ago, I was thinking how our poor dear Fan's life had widened out, while ours had apparently narrowed.

But I have found that the valley of the shadow of death is indeed only a ravine through which we are led to the wide sweet mountain pastures, to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense. Through it, His rod and His staff comfort us; and beyond it is the "table spread," "the head anointed," the "cup overflowing."

And now Fan's little gleam of sweet earthly happiness is somewhat shaded. Her husband is crippled for life by a fall in unloading a ship.

Their own cherished little home had to be broken up, and now they have come together to be mother and father to our little orphan home.

It never seems to enter into Fan's head or heart that she has anything to murmur about, or into his; although

he is smitten at once from his vigorous, healthful prime into decrepitude and helplessness.

They have no conception that they are making any sublime surrender to the will of God. They simply accept His will, with the unquestioning confidence and submission of trusting children.

He commands, and they yield. He demands, and they give up.

Oh, how much of the very highest Christian life is lived in the lowest places, and lived there best, because unconsciously; because no one thinks it is anything more than the natural necessary Christian life of all!

What, in fact, as the Benedictine Mother Margaret said, is the life of faithful domestic service but this? What are the active Religious Orders but an attempt at what may be, at what often is, fulfilled by Christian servants, living in other people's homes, caring for other people's interests, having nothing, yet possessing all things? To accept is to resign; to resign is to accept. To obey is better than to sacrifice, because it is the sacrifice of the will, of the inmost self.

Old books, old sayings, old hymns come to me with new meaning. German hymns—Spitta's, Terstegen's, Gerhardt's, St. Bernard's "Jesu dulcis Memoria," Zinzendorf's translation of it, Brother Laurence's "Practice of the Presence of God," that wonderful book which is not a mere book, but the last fragrance of a holy life, crushed, and rising in pure incense to heaven, Adolphe Monod's "Adieux." "La Communion Fréquente," how deep it is! And especially "*Le Secret d'une Vie simple, active et paisible.*" After speaking of the life of the Lord, "Les bonnes œuvres jetées à pleines mains non pas les unes sur les autres, mais les unes après les autres. Nous n'avons pas l'idée de ce que nous pourrions faire si nous étions complètement perdus dans cet a

complet avec la volonté de Dieu, l'action de l'homme devenant comme une vie divine au sein de l'humanité, en qui s'accomplit quelque chose de la force de Dieu. Il ne saurait y avoir de carrière manquée si mes projets sont pris dans le plan de Dieu à mon égard."

So much of the restlessness is gone out of my life with regard to others, as well as with regard to myself.

God is no Pharaoh, no taskmaster to demand bricks without straw. If the straw fails, if the strength fails, just then He needs from us *not* the bricks, but something else, or perhaps for the moment *nothing* else, only always our will, our hearts, ourselves.

The endless little attentions needed by dear Aunt O'Brien have become sweet to me. She herself becomes dearer, and it seems to me she *is* sweeter and more contented herself, enters into all kinds of little plans for others with more freedom, and less worry and anxiousness.

Perhaps it is, after all, I myself, with my passion for a *carrière*, and my strong will, that have helped considerably to make this atmosphere of fret and disquiet around us.

If honestly, really, always, it is God's will we want, how can that fail?

For (unutterable joy!) the will of God is not a decree in the past, but the will of ever-present love present now! my King, my King!

I feel sometimes so curiously apart, and yet so truly in the heart of the lives around me.

My heart is really in the calm of His presence, not so much itself calm, as bathed in His calm, not so much peaceful as "kept by His peace," which seems to me more.

And, I scarcely know how, the lives of those dear to me are more translucent, nearer to me.

Instead of the joys and sorrows of this transitory life becoming indifferent to me, they seem to become deeper. *Nothing* seems little or petty. Indeed, nothing *is* petty in human life but unreality, conventionality, untruth; and the very unreality itself is so often only a glittering ice-palace or a piteous wigwam which the soul is trying to build for itself, because it has lost sight of home!

Just now we are in an era of new dawnings. The children have become men and women, and strange new attractions are drawing heart to heart; the mist of nebulae, resolving itself into a group of double stars.

I sit and watch, and wonder what will come of it; what lessons the Divine Love will teach through these sacred mysteries of the human love it has created, whether the lessons will come, to these precious ones, through privation or fulfilment, through sorrow or joy. Ah, through sweet harvests of joy, I trust! Even love fulfilled must have its sorrows. But, oh! Thou Who knowest the joy of loving and the sorrow of loving as none besides, if it may be, let these children be taught, not by negatives, but by positives; by sorrow afterwards (for that is inevitable to love on earth), but, if possible, first by joy!

To-day I have had two love-confidences.

The Felix-Hunters have been spending the day with us; Monica and Antonia; and Bertrand Hunter came to guard them home, which Eustace seemed to think a superfluous attention, as he had intended to perform that chivalrous office himself, and was not to be diverted from it.

Sweet old glamour, which is not only a light, neither of sun nor moon, the unreal crusts and reveals the be-
man soul to another.

Sweet old mystery, which no outside touch can help truly to develop; which the most tenderly penetrating, motherly eyes can only watch with folded hands, like the guardian angel in Retsch's etchings of the Game of Chess picture.

It so happened that when Bertrand Hunter arrived, Monica and Antonia had not yet returned from a walk in the woods with Eustace.

I proposed to take him to meet them, but as there was some uncertainty about the way, he seemed to think the possibility of missing them too terrible a risk to encounter, and preferred to wait quietly with me.

Quietly, however, I cannot say he did wait. He roved, like an unsatisfied bee, from book to book and from painting to painting, until he lighted on an early drawing of Monica's in a book of mine.

"One can see the same touch," he said, in a reverential tone; "the same penetration into the hidden glory and meaning of the commonest things."

I suppose he could; but I cannot say it had previously occurred to me.

I felt as sometimes one feels with a disciple of some eccentric school of art, afraid to wound the feelings of the worshipper by coldness, and equally afraid to offend his judgment by praise in the wrong direction. For to my uninitiated eyes it was a very infantine attempt, kept evidently without a due perception of its profundities, out of a blind, maiden-auntly love to the little one who had brought it to me one birthday morning.

It was a child with a lamb; and the lamb had, I confess, seemed to me anatomically vague. But, then, so were the lambs in the early Catacombs; and no doubt ought to have seen the lamb-like possibilities in that dog-like nose and those apparently wooden legs.

"Always goes to the heart of things!" he said.

I could cordially agree; because I think that

is just what our Monica does. Something in my tone I suppose, encouraged him to proceed.

"Miss Bertram," he said, "I wonder if it is of the least use venturing to entertain the shadow of a hope. I am not used to think myself altogether on a low level of culture. But since I have seen this family, I have felt as if I were a kind of Australian savage; all my contempt about culture seems to drop off from me like much ignorant and vulgar pretension. The reality of culture is with them, 'sweetness and light,' truth, penetrative insight into the beauty of the commonest natural things, a penetrative sympathy with the commonest human lives. And," he added, in a voice tremulous with earnestness, "I am convinced that it is because in some way they have penetrated to the heart of things."

He paused for a minute, and then looking up suddenly in my face, he added, "And more, I am persuaded that this life at the heart of things means Christianity."

My song, "My heart is at the secret source of every precious thing," came to my lips involuntarily.

"That is it," he said; "I have seen it in them all in the saintly patient mother, in the sweet, housewife Margaret, in the very child May, with her love for animals, in the frank boy Walter, as much as in any; in all. And perhaps you do not know how much this means for me. I had persuaded myself Christianity was obsolete; on its dark side, an obsolete superstitious on its better side, a lovely, incredible myth. And here are Christians! men, women, children, boys! The thing exists, the life is there; a life which is perfectly human: it is the perfect blossom and fruit of humanity, but which the human alone has never produced in its tenderness and depth. In the universality of its sympathy,—(it despises nothing;) in its lofty indifference to public opinion; in its lowly readiness to learn. It

down all caste, intellectual or social; it reverences all real distinctions; it is the same in all; yet it does not destroy one natural healthy variety of character. And this I have learned from them, and first of all from her."

"It is a strong link indeed between you."

He replied rapidly—

"It is a link which binds me to her and to them for ever. That need scarcely be said. But," he added with difficulty, "what right have I to ask her to bind a beautiful life like hers to mine, which has in it no such light, but is at best only a pale, etiolated, fruitless leafage, shining in the reflected light of hers?"

"You speak as if you were living in a finished and fixed *Divina Commedia*," I said, "you fixed to this world, and she to another. As if your sphere were that dim, dumb circle, where Dante places the grand old Pagans, and where the air is heavy, not with weeping, but with sighs, who live 'in longing, but without hope;' and hers among those with the '*angelico riso*,' who are '*gioconde della faccia di Dio*.' But no such gulf divides you. *Her* light is *yours*; not her moonlight, but her Sun."

"Listen a moment!" he said, in a very low voice. "I am afraid of myself. For it was not Christianity I loved first. It was Monica. And I am afraid, in heaven and earth, it is still Monica. I am afraid of bringing an untruth into my life, and, almost more, of bringing it into hers."

I ventured to say—

"I do not think untrue people are afraid they are untrue."

"You think, then, I might venture to show her what I feel for her? The affection, of course, cannot be helped."

"If you cannot help loving," I said, "I do not think she will long be able to help seeing."

"One word more," he said hesitatingly. "You think it is not altogether hypocrisy for any one to try to pray, whose prayers seem to amount to little more than, 'Make me good enough to love her?'"

"I think our wishes have touched the heart to which we pray, long before we know how to utter them," I said, "Yet I think you might perhaps improve that prayer. It would scarcely be hypocrisy, and could surely not be in vain, to ask, 'Teach me to love Him who makes her what I love.' And," I ventured to add, "I may be old-fashioned enough to recommend to you a form of prayer which has borne many a confused longing straight to its goal. 'Those things which in our blindness we cannot, and for our unworthiness we dare not ask, give us for the worthiness of Thy dear Son.'"

Just then there were steps in the hall, which he knew as well as I did, and we could say no more.

Monica is so little self-conscious, so intensely occupied with the subjects or people that interest her, that perhaps she may not perceive the love she has won. Yet I question very much if, during their journey home last evening, she could remain altogether blind.

I thought, perhaps, without indiscreet questioning, I might have learned something on the subject from Austin, when he returned.

But this young person is living in another world of his own, and apparently had regarded Monica principally in the light of the adoration of Antonia.

"What do you think of these girls' friendships, Aunt Winifred?" he asked. "I never saw anything like the devotion of that child to Monica."

"Would she not say anything to you?" I said.

"As Monica's brother, of course, as much as I liked, about Monica!" he replied, with a light tone. "I scarcely think that kind of gether desirable or sane."

"She seems a dear, eager, enthusiastic, impulsive child. You know the old saying about school-girls' friendships," I said demurely.

"There are school-girls and school-girls," he replied, turning the tables on me. "Antonia is a child in simplicity and frankness, but scarcely in anything else, and her enthusiasm is no weak effervescence. She has a deep, fervent, true nature, I feel sure. I never saw any one more single-hearted. And think out of what an atmosphere! I only know," he added, "she has done me all the good in the world. She has been to me like a glimpse into the first centuries of Christendom, like a new spring-time in the world, and in my life."

"Ah! Austin," I said, "don't be jealous of Monica. She has done good service to you. And depend upon it the heart that can love, as Antonia loves Monica, is worth waiting for."

"Aunt Win," he said, "do you think I don't know that? Do you think I don't shape every plan of my life just in that direction?"

So my two love-stories are launched. I see few rocks ahead, except the rocks which that ancient impetuous river is sure enough to sweep along with it, springing from its cradle on the mountains to be the joy and freshness of the working levels of the world.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE MOTHER'S NOTE-BOOK.

WE are in the busy toiling old city again.
Once more all my children are under my roof.

But the old home exists no more. It is no more the nest. They sit around me, my nestlings, each with its own song on its own spray, close gathered around me ; yet only perched and hovering there for the hour.

They are all around me again, all as dear as ever, as loving to each other, if possible more loving than ever to me ; yet not one of them is the same.

And yet it is more than half joy to me that it is so.

They come back to me, to my inmost heart, my children ; but in the inmost heart of more than one of them an inner depth has been unsealed which is not mine, and which certainly I do not wish sealed up again. It is not that I have less, or am less to them, but they are and have more.

I am speaking as if there had been changes in our outward life. But as yet there are none.

A proposition was made us that Margaret and Monica should undertake a school recently begun for girls mostly of the middle-class.

Monica entered into it at once with an eagerness which a little surprised me, knowing how interested she was in Antonia Hunter. But I knew that she had a genuine enthusiasm for teaching, and for raising the

whole tone of woman's education ; and I attributed her readiness for the change simply to that, and to the happiness I know it is to each of them for us to be together.

Margaret's reluctance to leave her village work also surprised me a little.

Dorothy's hesitation in the matter perplexed me less, since I had long thought her attachment to all things Teutonic was not altogether a question of race.

However, all these mysteries were by degrees explained to me before we had been long established in this cosy little house under the shelter of the Abbey.

In the first place, before we left Combe, Victor Hunter surprised me by a very frank and orderly declaration to me of his attachment to Margaret, which it seems did not by any means surprise my Margaret, when it was communicated to her.

With these two, things are going on in a straightforward and old-fashioned manner, as if they had understood each other all their lives, and were determined that whatever their affection is to each other it should be no disquiet to any one else.

The only stipulation is, for Lady Katharine's sake, that the engagement shall not be proclaimed for six months ; so that it shall seem, as it is, a natural alliance between two distant cousins, and not occasion any complication as to Lady Katharine's scheme of village teaching.

We were still in the full confusion of unpacking and packing into our little Westminster home, when the explanation of Dorothy's Teutonic enthusiasm arrived in the person of a young German cavalry officer, one of the Von Schönbergs ; and I cannot say the rest of the world have derived much benefit from the society of these two young persons since the betrothal.

Dora's strongest continental alliance is with a young

French married woman, a distant connection of the Bertram family, Madame des Ormes, who seems to combine much of the sweetness and tender grace and child-like piety which shone in the mother of Alphonse De Lamartine.

The world has grown wider to my children, and I trust the Church also, during their absences, and through them to me also.

The two other attachments are not so prosperous, or at least not so advanced.

Austin has come back to a child-like faith, greatly, I think, through seeing the light Christianity has brought into the life of Antonia Hunter.

When all seemed still misty and uncertain to him, he tried to point her out of the storm and mist to the Rock of Refuge which he knew existed, though he could not grasp it. And through her grasp of it he learned once more its solidity.

In learning this, he could not help learning the beauty and truth of Antonia's character; and a deep reverent protective affection for her has possessed his heart.

He feels no right to tell his love until he has a home to offer her. She is very young, and her heart at present seems scarcely to have room for any other affection, beyond her own family, but her love to Monica. But Austin will not change, and I think his steadfast patient affection must one day wake up a response, when he dares to show it.

With Monica it is different.

I am not quite sure if she yet knows her own heart.

One evening, a week after they returned from spending a memorable day at Mrs. O'Brien's, Bertrand Hunter startled her by letting her see his affection for her.

It was after a musical evening party; her singing had

been admired, and Mr. Gregson especially had been talking a good deal to her, entering into her painting.

Monica was in the school-room, replacing her drawings in her portfolio, when Bertrand came to her and said he could bear the reticence and suspense no longer, told her how she was all the world to him, and entreated a direct answer—yes or no : anything would be better than that she should, by any misunderstanding, drift away from him, or be swept away from him, without her even knowing that with her he would lose everything.

Something in the suddenness and passionate earnestness of his manner, I think, bewildered her.

She said it seemed to her as if he were sweeping her into a pagan world,—a stormy passionate sea without a shore. She could not bear to be required to be all the world to any one. She felt as if he were reversing the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, and trying to drag her down with him into a Hades where there was no living air, no sun, no Christ; where she would have to stand on a wretched pedestal and be adored, and try for ever, in vain, to make up to him for daylight and heaven.

Her whole being at the moment seemed to fold up and shrink from him.

She could not explain it to him nor to herself. He had interested her, attracted her, from the beginning, more than any one in the house, or out of it; and now she felt as if a wall of ice had dropped down between them.

It was no struggle between religion and affection. It was a shrinking of her whole nature, in instinctive abhorrence from being, as it seemed to her, his religion, his divine life.

Religion was actually in her heart, in her inmost heart. Christ was actually the Master enthroned in the very centre of her heart; and to be asked, at once, as it

seemed to her to take His place in the life of another, and leave Him out of her own, simply closed her heart.

It was as if a flood had rushed down the wrong side of a lock, and closed the gates it sought to enter.

He went away in an agony; not for an instant reproaching her, but reproaching himself bitterly for bringing disquiet into the peace of her life.

He said he saw it was hopeless; it was *'himself'* she shrank from; and against that, there was no pleading. She longed to say one word to explain; but her own feeling was too dim to herself.

She could not say what she shrank from—what so folded up her heart from him.

She only felt that she would have given anything she possessed to help and comfort him, and repay him for all his generous care of her; but that, what he wanted, she was as totally unable to give him, as a bud to open itself at its own will, or any one else's will, into a flower.

And so they parted.

Soon after, Monica gladly accepted the offer of this school; and since her return she has devoted herself, heart and soul, to her work. But I think she is scarcely yet all herself, scarcely yet able to comprehend her own feeling or her own duty.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MONICA'S NOTE-BOOK.

I THINK I was right ; I know I could not help doing as I did ; and yet all my old bright world is haunted by his gentle words of parting.

"I know you would have helped me and loved me if you could," he said ; and the voice so gentle, and the look so despairing, and yet so unapproachable !

If he had only begun with that look and that tone ! But it all seemed so vehement, so absorbing, the love he gave and that he wanted.

I felt as if he were trying to drag me down into some dreadful, sunless, godless Hades. And how could I have helped him, or have been to him what he really wants, there ?

But now I feel as if I were some dreadful, unloving, self-satisfied spirit who had looked over the walls of heaven (as if any such spirit could be there !) and seen a brother's spirit struggling to climb up from the abyss, and wistfully imploring a hand or even a smile to help, and had turned away and refused ; and then, turning back to heaven, had found all the songs of joy, and the very Voice that calls them forth, the Voice that said, "Cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out," for ever, just in that one low quiet wail, too tender and trusting to

be a reproach, "I know you would have helped and loved me if you could."

And I feel as if the only heavenly thing to do would be to go out, and down and down, to any depth of suffering, and seek and find him, and bring him home.

And nevertheless it seemed as if I could not, *could* not, give him what he wanted; anything, anything but that.

It is not true, whatever my perplexed heart says, that I refused to help him. I would have gone out of any paradise of mine to help him the least bit of the way up. But he wanted *me*, the whole of me; nothing else would help him but just that, just myself, and that it seemed impossible to give.

It seemed so then; yes, as impossible as to force a rosebud into a rose by an external touch, or by a sudden fire.

He said it was *himself* I shrank from. And I was sure of nothing. And I thought it must be.

But since, I have often felt it was not. I never came so near before to any one as to him. No one ever seemed so instinctively to comprehend me. There is no one in the world whom I seem so instinctively to comprehend.

When he had left, I was startled to find how the meaning died out of the ordinary family conversation. It dawned on me for the first time how much we had spoken for each other, with the quiet understanding that whatever the rest might feel, between us there was always a response. And now the words seem to drop soundless into a vacuum.

I found also, by its loss, how his watchful, silent care had surrounded me. Countless considerations that had become common as the *sun* *in the air* I breathed came back to my heart and seemed to come; but now I find

them was lost, that every one of them had been silently penetrating into my heart, that every one of them had photographed itself unobserved in my memory.

And the house and the world did seem terribly silent and empty. And through the blank and silence kept echoing those gentle words, "I know you would have helped and loved me if you could," until it became almost intolerable to stay there. I seemed a traitor to Antonia, and to every one there. For, Antonia, I was sure, knew something had gone wrong, although she never breathed a suspicion.

It was a great relief to have what seemed the call of another duty.

I thought, in the sweet calm presence of Mother, the right and wrong of things, at all events, would become clear to me; and in the healthy atmosphere of home, and of good, hard intellectual work, all that was morbid in these self-reproaches and perplexities of mine would vanish.

Before I left the Felix-Hunters, I ventured to tell Antonia I thought she could be very much to her brother, and that I was sure he needed her, and would care for her.

"I *am* something to him," she said. And then she added, "I always wrote him the history of our readings in the Bible together, and of what you said. Until just lately," she concluded, in a hoarse, abrupt tone, "when he told me I had better not write about those conversations any more, just now."

The words pierced terribly deep into my heart. He could not take help of any kind, any more, from my hand!

I suppose my face betrayed my emotion, for Antonia hastened to comfort me by adding—

But he says in a postscript, 'Don't be troubled, little I don't, and I won't, give up reading your book.'

(He means, you know, the Bible.) I want it; and I want many things I want in it.'"

That ought to have consoled me entirely, I think my anxieties about him were so entirely disinterested.

If the help does reach him, of course, if I feel what I thought I felt, I ought to feel quite content, indeed greatly relieved, that it should reach him from another hand.

But I cannot say I do.

And yet I think it may be right that the religion of the love should get disentangled.

But all this conflict and perplexity have a very trying effect in making the history which used to be so near and so vivid to me seem a long way off.

I must not suffer this; it is weak and morbid.

The histories are *true!* Raleigh, and Tyndal, and Queen Elizabeth, and Shakespeare, and Martin Luther and Alfred the Great *lived!* the victory over the Spanish Armada was a reality, and the discovery of America a reality, however dim and confused and misty they seem to have become for the moment in my life. And the lives of the girls we have to teach are worth clear and helping, whatever tangle my own life may just now have fallen into. With my whole force of spirit and nerve and muscle I will hold the Hand that has promised to lead me, and believe it is leading me, although it seems as if I were not going on at all, but stumbling and floundering, and wandering back again and again to the same bewildering point, as if in a bad dream.

And at least I can pray that my mistake, if I make one, if it makes me miserable (and I begin to think sometimes it does), may not make him go wrong. At least it must be right to ask that.

I look out from my bedroom in this little room which has, I think, the most poetical

over the infirmary garden where the Benedictine monks used to walk contentedly, when they came to the forty years of monastic life, after which everything disquieting was to be kept from them.

Poor old monks, was that possible? Did they then love no one, in the world, or in Religion? Did all they love always go the right way? Were they always sure they had taken the right way themselves?

Could they live and not love? Could they love and not be liable to suffer?

Had everything settled into apathetic indifference for them, or had they indeed still waters and green pastures within, wherein, through every storm, their quiet spirits rested?

I know the will of God is sweetest of all, even in suffering. But when we are not quite sure we have understood or done it, and the suffering comes from our misunderstanding and misdoing?

I should like to question the ghosts of some of the old monks who must have walked on the green turf under those beautiful grey Abbey walls, or paced the cloisters.

No doubt there were some like Thomas à Kempis among them, to whom it was true, "If thou bearest the cross, it shall bear thee in turn."

But if we have made *another* bear the bitter cross, and crossed *what God meant* for them and for us!

Often I go and stand alone, in silence, beside that tomb of the Countess Margaret of Richmond, which seems to me the inmost sanctuary of peace and beauty of the beautiful old Abbey. The quiet of the place—an island of tranquillity amidst the hushed din of the surrounding city—the quiet of the sweet, kind, tranquil,

 full aged face, and folded hands, the very ideal
 and holy old age, in acquiescent and expectant

repose, always distil like healing balm into my inmost heart.

I am always thankful that our Lord chose sparrows as the exemplary birds for us, chirping everywhere as none else do; not to be dispersed by all our din, or stifled by our smoke, pursuing their own bird-life of trust, neither sowing nor reaping, while the heavenly Father feedeth them.

Yes, your lesson and His is true. Chirp it on to me, poor little brown birds, who have no song but a chirp, and enjoy your chirpings as if they were nightingales' songs!

"Are ye not of much more value than they?"

Yes, He will, *does*, care for us.

Can He care for one of these falling to the ground, and let a human soul, through a mistake of mine, fall into darkness away from Him?

There is something wonderfully calming about those solid, old, grey walls; the generations that built them, that have dwelt within their shadow, that have been fed with their majestic beauty, that have made them live with prayers and praise!

And the generations that have gone thence from "seeing through the glass darkly," "through the mirror," in the riddle, to the "Face to face."

And in Thee even now there is no darkness at all. And Thou hast promised to lead us.

The light is not *future* to us, *only invisible*, and *not* invisible to Him whose Hand is leading us.

I will not yield to the "sentimental fallacy" about nature or history.

The whole world is *not* darkened, because I am perplexed.

The brilliant light that shines like the star of England from the great national Tower, the tower that glows like a hill in the early dawn, means something. It tells of the old "island story," with its many conquests over wrong and oppression. And neither England nor the world are to begin to dissolve, into chaos, now.

Antonia has been here. She says her brother is full of plans which he is carrying out for the education and help of the men of his works—better dwellings, allotments; and she said also Sunday classes, and reading of the Bible with them.

Surely, then, I need not disquiet myself about the effect of my mistake on him.

And, for me, it can be borne, it must be borne; and it shall.

It is over; the perplexity, the darkness are over! And perhaps these will be the last words I write in this book.

He came to see us all, to see me once more. He thought it cowardly to have a terror in the world he could not face. And he resolved to see me again, and make himself acknowledge, he said, that the world was better for my being in it, although I could not brighten it for him.

And when he came, he said something else. And we who always understood each other, from the beginning, understand each other now in the inmost depths of our hearts.

This wonderful love and joy of ours has already a history, which I think it will take us all our lives to unfold to each other; a history of mysterious life and growth, as of something which is of our very essence, *and yet is independent of our wills.*

He went away from me that evening, at his own home, convinced it was entirely hopeless that we should ever be anything to each other. He was so convinced it was *himself* I could not love.

He said he felt a desperate indifference to everything, at first, as if my not being able to care for him proved his whole being worthless ; and if he was below the touch of my hand, it did not matter how much lower.

And yet, he said, there was something in the thought of me which made sinking impossible.

He had grown used to looking upward and climbing up-hill, he said, through me ; and the habit continued, although the hill-top seemed a barren waste, and his upward gaze met nothing but an averted face.

But still, he said, that divine upward tendency his soul had begun to acquire in loving me could not cease.

Until at last, he said, he grew able to look up beyond the blank my absence had made, upward and upward, even into heaven. And there he saw a face, pitying and divine, and *never turned away*. He felt the love from which all love is kindled ; he bowed, and recognised the will which all holy wills obey.

And at last, in an agony, he surrendered, he resigned the hope which had been his life ; little indeed to surrender, he said, since all hope was already gone.

But in his inmost heart he did give me up then, to God. And a solemn peace came upon him, as of an accepted sacrifice.

And then he dared to think of me again no more as a lost joy it was anguish to remember, but as a good creature of God, which it was good to think existed for God, if not for him.

And then he ventured to come and see me again.

And then, he says, a surprise of unutterable joy awaited him. And God gave me back to him.

I *could* not come to him before, he says, because he was not ready.

God took us from each other, consecrated us to Himself, and now gives us back to each other, as it were, sacramentally consecrated, and doubly one another's because we are first **His own.**

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE nestlings are flown. The wedding days are past. The little nest is all but empty.

The birds are gone to fill other places with the joy of their dear voices, and make other houses into homes.

Will our children, indeed, bear through the world something of our life? of thine, my beloved, who seemest often less removed from me than they are?

Words, tones, that whole life of thine, slowly distilling day by day through all the moulding of the earliest years of theirs,—a deep joy it is to me to think these are making sweet other homes and other lands!

My alabaster-box was broken, not indeed by my hands. But I do acquiesce in His will. I do thank Him that some of the fragrance gathered in it has spread far and wide, and filled some corners of His house.

My words echo back upon me as if they had a plaint in them.

But my heart is full of content. If the old home had remained, roofed and centred as of old, these changes must have come, and would have come in the guise of joys. And now the only thing that touches them with sadness is, I know, a superstition, as if Maurice were *in the past* of the old home only, and not in the present.

He lives; and growth, with all its happy changes, is surely the law of the summer where he abides.

They were all beautiful in their way, our four weddings. Monica, and Dorothy first, in the village church near Mrs. O'Brien's, Austin, and Margaret afterwards in the old parish church by the river. Monica and Bertrond, Dorothy and Karl, had all the beauty of sunshine and country; pathways strewn with flowers by children, Aunt Winifred's orphans among them, the quiet entering on the new life together, in the drive home from church through green country lanes, the return to a Paradise of blossoms and grassy slopes and trees.

Hedges bridal with hawthorn, fields like fields of the cloth of gold with buttercups, undulating woods suffused with a deep blue mist of hyacinths, banks still starred with primroses, avenues of chestnuts festive with their lamp-like spikes of blossom as if illuminated for the day, lilacs perfuming the air, laburnums "dropping wells of fire," England radiant in her beauty as any southern land, earth and sky overflowing with joy.

Karl von Schönberg said, "At last I see the land of your Shakespeare. At last I see that he was not a solitary isolated peak, towering above you into another air, but your very own. The Imogens, the Beatrices, the Queen Katharines, they lived near him then, they live among you still. That I have long learned. But at last I see Shakespeare's England; the gem set in the silver sea which he loved so passionately."

Ah, it is the *truth* the poets see. In their loftiest moments they see nothing loftier than just the inmost truth, of nature, of human life, of God.

This wonderful parable of a world!

For what is all this glory of spring but the bridal hour of nature, but the type of the true great bridals of the world?

Those young lives, those sweet maidens of mine, in their soft clouds of symbolical whiteness, what has nature so beautiful in her supremest type of beauty as this true

abandonment of heart to heart, this sacred union of life with life, this love from which all the sacred things of human life flow, and which remains amidst all that can flow from it, the deepest and most sacred thing of all?

Ah, how could I, who have known it, and for the moment lost its touch and sight—even with a mother's love, quite bear to witness it, if I did not believe that this love is immortal.

“ Could we forget the widowed hour,
And look on spirits breathed away
As on a maiden on the day
When first she wore her orange flower !

“ When crown'd with blessing she did rise
To take her latest leave of home,
And hopes and light regrets that come
Make April of her tender eyes ;

“ And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's face
As parting, with a long embrace,
She enters other worlds of love.

“ Her office then to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each ;

“ *And doubtless unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In such great offices as suit
The full-blown energies of heaven.*”

How could I bear it, still less rejoice in it as I do, had I not the power to feel that the present of his life and mine is as real as the past, and the future dearer than the past?

“ Less yearning for the friendship fled
Than some strong bond which is to be.”

“ O days and hours, your work is this,
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace
For fuller after-gain of bliss.

“ That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet,
And unto meeting, when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue

“For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.”

And it has grown to be so with me.

And I sit at the weddings of my children with a heart as truly a bride's as theirs, steeped in a sorrow and a joy born of it deeper, indeed, than any bride can know; a wife who knows by the long proof of fulfilling years what such love as this now dawning in their hearts can make of life, and knows it is waiting undimmed, nay, much more than undimmed, “kept,” as the old nursery hymn says, “by a Father's hand,” in the summer of love, waiting in the Father's house for me.

Festivals indeed these weddings of my children have been to me, commemorative, actual, ante-typical.

The beauty that made the other two weddings fair, was beauty for the spirit rather than for the eye.

Along the old unlovely street to the old unlovely church, with its galleries and two-storeyed pulpit, surrounded by the din and the dingy atmosphere.

Yet to me the fairest place in the world.

No picturesque groups of children strewing flowers; no sympathetic festivity of golden fields and blossoming trees and sunny skies.

It was a London summer. The trees were almost as colourless with smoke as the dresses of the poor unpicturesque people who filled the church.

But the church was full.

Dear, pale, worn faces beaming with pure joy of sympathy and love! Hearts rising out of all their own trouble and care and pain, into a sunshine of delight in our delight! Familiar faces that responded to every expression of mine; faithful eyes that through their tears saw Maurice everywhere as the centre of the whole, just as I did. Prayers of the poor, receiving in this world

so little for themselves, and sublimely asking so much for us.

Princely, they seem to me, these blessings of the poor, from their destitution showering good on others. Nay! much more than princely. It is not that they are consciously saying, "We in our lifetime evil things,—our kingdom, our palaces are to come."

It is infinitely more.

It is that they are content with the will of God, now, for ever, as it is. Rich in that; rich in Him, satisfied in Him, and therefore divinely rich to bestow, through Him, all beautiful gifts on others.

Of the Christian poor this is true to the letter.

Of all the contented loving poor it is so true, I think, that our Lord must have been naturally more at home in their place, as simply in itself not the lowest, but the highest, blessing poverty, as He blesses childhood, with something like a sublime recklessness of the misinterpretations that might be made of His words.

After writing these things, I went by chance into Margaret and Monica's empty room, and there the loss of the children overpowered me, and I sat down and cried as I have scarcely cried since I was a child like one of them.

The room was just empty with the kind of emptiness that is so terribly like death.

All the body there, all the shell; and the meaning, the expression gone.

The chair on which the children sat, the bed on which they slept, the table at which they wrote. But all their little treasures gone, the photographs, the childish drawings, the sacred symbols, of religion or of human joy, the inkstand and drawing-box, the books,—gone, like the children, never to come back as dwellers in the home.

They will come back, but never more to abide, never more to the home; never more to feel that this is the centre.

Ah, indeed, they are gone from me, in some senses, far more than Maurice!

For he has only changed his dwelling-place. They have changed their home.

Death is a changing of houses. Marriage is a changing of homes.

Wherever in the worlds far off or near, Maurice and I are together again, will be *home* to us two. But to these children the mother, dearly as we love each other, can no longer make the home. Never more!

Yes, the mother's love is indeed called to be self-renouncing, finds its fulfilment in self-renunciation more than any.

I think perhaps we scarcely take enough from the example of the blessed mother of the Lord, with her meek acceptance of the mother's renunciation, which is the true mother's crown.

Long since I wrote—

“Not for thyself, thy motherhood,
Not for thy home that life-stream springs,
For thee then, too, the higher good
Must come through death of lower things.

“The village home, so sweet to thee,
With joys so hallowed and complete,
For Him no Father's house would be,
No limit for thy Saviour's feet.

“The will long meekly bound to thine
Now calmly claims its sovereign place,
And takes a range of love divine
Thy mortal vision cannot trace.

“On us that mild reproof falls cold—
The words and not the tone we hear,
On thee, who knewest Him of old,
It casts no shade of doubt or fear.

THE BERTRAM FAMILY.

"For thy meek heart has read Him true,
And bowing, wins His 'rather bless'd,'
Whate'er He saith unto you, do,
Embracing as its rule and rest.

"Then through earth's ruins heaven shines bright.
The widest sphere, the dearest home—
Save that where Christ is Lord and Light,
Were but at last the spirit's tomb

"Thus laying down thy special bliss,
Thou winnest joy, all joy above—
The endless joy of being His,
And sharing in His works of love."

It is long ago I wrote those words; and only now I begin to learn them.

If it is true that "we learn in suffering what we teach in song," I think the converse is also true, of all true song. We teach in song what *afterwards* we learn in suffering. However simple, all true song is deeper than the singer knows. "Earnestly desiring to look into" the things of which they spoke, "searching what or what manner of things the spirit that was in them did testify," is true of all real poetical as well as prophetic utterance.

For so many years, He had been subject unto them, and now the sacred home at Nazareth was left behind, broken up for ever. Her suggestion could no longer be to the Son the indication of the Father's will.

But His divine work was hers. Without a murmur she embraced His will, and so entered into His divine work, becoming the joyful medium of His mission: "*Whatever He saith unto you, do it.*"

And the servants did it. And for her also the water was turned into wine.

And so, doubtless, it was, again, when his mother and two brethren stood without desiring to speak with Him, and looking round on His disciples, He said, "Behold my mother and my brethren."

The home at Nazareth had expanded into the world which He was to restore to the Father's will, and to transform into the Father's House.

And in the inmost circle of that home, close to Him, she stood, and surely ever stands, who so faithfully accepted and did the will of God.

Again, for her the loss was transfigured into gain; the water was made wine.

Yes; we mothers have nothing to fear. The love we seem to sacrifice is rendered back to us transformed, enriched.

And at the cross, ah! there is no fear but that we shall meet again there! that we shall be permitted to tread the Dolorous Way together, or to stand beside our beloved there.

It was because He understood, not because He misunderstood, the depth, the self-sacrifice, the absorption in the welfare of a child, necessary and natural in a mother's love, that Jesus trusted Mary to understand Him at Cana.

It was because He has made that love the deepest, tenderest type of His own.

Yesterday, as I was sitting in Margaret and Monica's empty room in that uncontrollable burst of tears, I heard the pattering feet of May's little dog Dot trotting up the stairs.

He came and put his paws on my knee, and looked with his bright wistful brown eyes sympathetically in my face, and even licked my hands, a liberty he very seldom takes with me. I could not decline his attention. Poor fellow! it was all he had to give.

Looked through the dog's eyes into my face?

?

I had met him on the stairs in unexpectedly returning from self-imposed

expeditions of futile search. Poor Dot! And no one could tell him how futile it was!

But now he did not hunt about anywhere with his usual "intelligent curiosity," but calmly looked in my face, as much as to say, "It is of no use. I have looked everywhere for them. They are not here. They are gone. And I suppose you do not know any more than I do what has become of them."

Poor faithful beast! How I longed to explain to him that I *do* know, that they are happy and well, and remember him, and even send him messages in their letters; and that they will come back, and he will see them again.

But there is no such revelation possible to him. Absence, to dogs is an absolute unmitigated loss.

And yet they do not forget.

That brought so many thoughts to me.

How little we, who are the highest they know, can reveal to them, whose love for us is their religion!

To them all absence must seem what death seems to many of us.

Then let us reverse the lesson. To us death is no more a hopeless, absolute separation than any absence seems to them.

My children! what realities the places to which you have gone have become to me!

Our little Dora's German home makes Germany no foreign land to me. And the old city on the hot levels of India, where our Austin is magistrate, grows familiar. My heart lives there, and my imagination roams as freely there as in the busy English manufacturing district where Monica and Bertram are at work, or in the south London parish, where Margaret and Victor Hunter seem beginning our own life over again.

I thought I had sufficiently vivid ideas of Germany

and India before. But now they live, in quite a different way, with that precious life in the midst of them.

And so, a thousandfold, is it with the "better country," to which Maurice has gone.

So little did I seem to have known it before, that when he went to it from my side, all I had believed seemed almost to fade into a mist of fair dreams, into a meaningless refrain of sweet-sounding words.

He, the heart of my life, the life of my heart, the solid centre and bond for me of the home and the world, was no longer here, but *there*. What had I been meaning by songs, and crystal seas, and white-robed multitudes? Christ the Lord was indeed always there, and always real; and to Him I always clung, to Him I trusted Maurice. And that was infinitely much. But all the rest was dim.

But now all that life seems to have grown as real to me as Maurice himself, as our Lord Himself; its service, its joy, its work, its rest; this life not meanwhile becoming "a dream or empty show," but the reverse, more real and significant than ever, in its humblest details, as the threshold and school of that life. Not a mere introduction to be broken off, that the true story may begin, but the beginning of the true eternal history to be continued there. The unroofed home, so terrible at first, has become an hypæthral temple, open to the heavens.

And I wonder as little that more is not told us about the state of the Blessed there, as I wonder that Austin does not write to me from India,—“Mother, don't think I have lost my memory, or my interest in you, or have become blind, and deaf, and dumb, and altogether a different being. I assure you I am still your son, and still love you and my brothers and sisters.”—Or that Dorothy does not write from Geneva, “Don't think

I have forgotten English, because we speak another language here. I assure you I am quite the same as when you saw me last." How perplexed we should be at such an inane superfluity of assurances about what we never doubted!

Of course they are the same; of course they remember us, and love us, and are caring for us, and looking forward to meet us.

Do we need, then, any more such assurances about those who are *not* gone to strange lands, or among heathen people, or among new temptations, and untried perils to body and soul, but to Christ and all His perfected Christians, who have been living, ever with Him, beyond temptation, and peril, and change, and growing like Him these hundreds of years, who are in the home He is preparing for us? Nay, surely; infinitely less.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WINIFRED'S NOTE-BOOK.

THE normal, old-fashioned life of marrying and giving in marriage which I wished for Grace and Maurice's children, has come to four of them.

I rejoice greatly in it for them.

But I have arrived, lately, more at a real practical belief that the Church is really one Family, one Body, and that every true life is normal and perfect in its place in the whole, as much as a finger is normal in being a finger and not an ear.

The balancing of the claims of the individual with those of the corporate life is, I suppose, the perpetual problem of all human society ; and we only succeed in solving the problem by compromise, alternately maiming the force and freedom of individual life by sacrificing it to the Unity of the Body, or dissolving the Unity of the Body by the force of individual freedom.

The Divine Government surely undertakes to solve this problem without being subject to our limitations.

With God men do not exist in masses, but in multitudes. With Him, the Father is never lost in the Sovereign ; the free and perfect development of each child is as essential to His love as the perfection and unity of the whole family. That is, each subject of His kingdom is a child who has been taken home to His heart.

"Thou art as much His care, as if beside
Nor man nor angel lived in heaven or earth."

The ideal of each one is as precious to Him as the destiny of the race.

But we must be content that it should be His ideal, and not ours.

We must not say; the ideal of woman is wifehood and motherhood, and conclude therefore that all lives which do not realise this in an earthly home are incomplete and fragmentary, good as far as they go, but for ever undeveloped.

All that makes the ideal maiden, wife, mother, *is* the ideal of womanhood; but I believe this ideal has been perfected in many who have not fulfilled it outwardly in the earthly type. As Miss Lavinia said to me, "There are motherly old maids as well as old-maidish matrons."

I used to think one of the graces of old-maidenhood was to resign oneself to this incomplete development.

But now I have rather come to think that single life is only incomplete and fragmentary, as all human life is incomplete and fragmentary; and that the perfection of what God would have each one of us be may be attained in every condition in which He places us.

I no longer so much resign myself to Him to be as little as He wills. I give myself up to Him to be made *as much as He wills* and as can be made of me.

As that which seems to me one of the sublimest of Christian hymns—Robert Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra"—says:—

"Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, 'A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God, see all, nor be afraid!

" All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

" Look thou not down, but up !
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow !
Thou heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou with
earth's wheel ?

" But I, need now, as then,
Thee, God, who moulded men ;
And since, not even when the whirl was worst
Did I—to the wheel of life,
With shapes or colours rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst.

" So take and use Thy work,
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim.
My times be in Thy hand !
Perfect the cup so planned !
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same !"

It is glorious to abandon oneself to God, with the conviction that He will no more disregard the perfection of one beautiful capacity or faculty in us, the smallest possible branch or twig or leaf or blossom, than He would disregard the perfection of the whole body, the glory of the whole garden of souls.

Whatever it may be as to English society, in the Church there are no six women per cent. extra.

And when I see how many Englishwomen there are, in this generation at least, who as a matter of fact (from whatever defect in our social arrangements, and I think that it is a very serious defect) do not marry, it is an immense consolation to me to believe that each one of them may look up with full confidence to "the Hands that come forth from darkness, moulding men," and claim with a child-like trust, which the Heavenly Father will not disappoint, to be made the best and most beautiful being each is capable of being, to have His purpose, the divine ideal, fulfilled in each. No power missed

large faculty of blessing cramped, no lovely grace stunted, no endless capacity of loving unsatisfied.

It is happy to see the rest that has come to Aunt O'Brien, and the power of working, just now that the nervous dreads which have haunted her all her life are fulfilled, that she lies week after week, helpless and often suffering, in bed.

The thing that has paralyzed so much of her life by the fear of it, has come; and with it has come a grace and peace which casts the terror beneath her feet, and makes her victorious over the reality as she never was over the dread of it.

She never murmurs. She lies suffering and waiting rather than disturb any one. She goes forth in spirit from her couch of pain, and thinks and plans for us all.

It is as if the suffering which fetters and disables her had become really an anchor, fixing her to her rest in God, to a calm of content from which she is for the first time free to love and serve every one.

If she could have accepted the will of God for the future, in her years of anxiety and fear, as she does now for the present in her days of pain and weariness, what a joyful life hers might have been!

Thank God that it is such a peaceful liberated life now!

To-day she said to me, after a paroxysm of pain—

“Winifred, my darling, tell every one never to be afraid of God! He is pitiful and of tender mercy, and quite understands us, and what we want, and what we can bear. If I had known (as of course I ought to have known) how He can sustain when the worst comes, I should have been singing instead of mourning all my life.”

I have been making fresh acquaintance with some of my beloved German hymns.

How sure it is that all really simple and deep things
deepen with our depth and grow with our growth!

As so often, the hymns and prayers, the utterances
to God, soar so far above the statements about Him.

“Wie herrlich ist's ein Schäfflein Christi werden
Und in der Huld des treuesten Hirten stehn!
Kein höh'rer Stand ist auf der ganzen Erden
Als unverrückt dem Lamme nachzugehn.

“Hier findet es die angenehmsten Auen
Hier werd ihm stets en frischer Quell entdeckt.”

And again—

“Jesum lieben macht die Banden
Aller wahren Liebe fest.”

And again—

“Ach wie theur sind wir erworben
Nicht der Sünde Knecht zu zeyn,
Denn so wahr du best gestorben
Musst du uns auch machen rein.”

And again—

“Da krieg ich einen Kindersinn
Ich werd, und bleibe klein;
Und habe davon den Gewinn
Dem Höchsten nah zu seyn.”

And again—

“Wer nur hat was Jesus giebet;
Wer nur lebt aus seiner Füll;
Wer'nur will was ihm beliebet,
Wer nur kann was Jesus will.”

And again—

“Nun ich will mit Freuden
Sehen mas er thut
Wie er mich werd ansehen
Weil er doch nicht ruht,
Bis er noch kann halten
Seinen theuren Eid
Dass ich noch soll werden
Seine ganze Frennd.”

Dear quiet souls, making melody in your hearts for all
time, singing unseen in the shade, making a sunshine in
the shady place with your singing, how I love the solitary

voices which so long since have died into the light and the glory above !

I think there is a curious confusion in many of our minds between humility and despondency, distrust of self and distrust of what God can do in us and with us.

What a difference there is between living on our religious thought of God, and living by *faith in God*, in One ever with us, not ourselves !

Of trust in ourselves we are not to have a little, but none. Of trust in God we ought to have not a little, but the fullest possible measure.

It does make all the difference in all endeavour, in all conflict, whether we expect to succeed or to fail. What army could ever be victorious which deemed it a duty perpetually to recapitulate its defeats, and to regard failure as its normal condition ? What painter would ever paint his Transfiguration if he believed it humility to think he always must fail ?

On the other hand, doubtless, no artist ever reaches his highest ideal unless his ideal is always beyond his achievement.

These seem to me precisely the balancing truths in Christian life.

The expectation of failure leads to failure.

The expectation of success, in those who are honestly endeavouring, leads to success.

But, on the other hand, for ever and ever before and above us is our ideal ; the Christ Who only is holy, Who only is the Lord, and yet Who, St. Paul says, is "in" every Christian, "living" in each, and moulding each into the likeness of Himself.

But again : people say, "Certainly, if we could only live the life of faith, the life of perfect trust, we might

always overcome. But who does always trust? who does always overcome?"

This drives us back into the region of formularies and abstractions. And let us be very careful we never stay there; for that land is, I believe, the birthplace of nearly all the heresies.

On that ground there is no answer to that question. We must get back to the Thou and I; the personal, the childlike.

"No one does always trust." "No one does never sin."

And nevertheless Job said, thousands of years ago, "Though He slay me, yet *will I trust* in Him."

And we call that, not presumptuous, but sublime.

Would it be more simple, more childlike, more sublime, to say, "Father, I cannot be sure that I will trust Thee next year, or even to-morrow?"

Is that trusting now?

Whom can you not be sure you will trust? Will He change next year or to-morrow?

And again: in the *Te Deum* the Church has been singing for nearly two thousand years, "Vouchsafe to keep us this day without sin." Has the Church through all these centuries been vaguely aspiring after an impossibility?

Or, if we are to go on praying for it, are we to pray for it really in faith, that is in hope, every day in hope, because our faith and hope for to-day are not based on our own yesterdays, nor on the yesterdays of the universal Church, but on Him who is able to keep us without falling?

Surely, surely, the tone of the Psalms, of the Epistles, of the last conversations of our Lord with the disciples, is in a much higher key of confidence and joy than the majority of religious books!

St. P.

ibility of the most terrible failure
before us all, fought therefore

not uncertainly, not vaguely, not as one that beateth the air, contending with shadowy, unattainable, unconquerable foes, but as one that expected to be more than conqueror. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Christ Jesus our Lord."

Never let us be entangled into abstract statements, or formulated party cries.

But never let us give up for a moment the attitude of adoring, confiding trust, or the hope which maketh not ashamed.

For, did our Lord mean to set before His Church an unattainable impossible ideal to strain after and sigh after in vain for ever, when in the night before He suffered He said, "Abide in me and I in you, so shall ye bring forth much fruit. That my joy may *abide* in you, and that your joy may be *full*?"

Did He mean what He said when in those tender, restrained, measured words of last counsel He told the disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go away, I will send the Comforter unto you, and He shall abide with you for ever?"

Did St. Paul find it true, and St. John, in those their wonderful words of hope and power which seem to strain to bursting the harp strings of all human language?

Whatever we believe, let us believe that our Lord means us to overcome, and begin every morning of our lives, and meet every temptation, with the conviction that if we look to Him He will overcome in us, for us, "because greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world."

It seems to me so strange and wilful, this fighting about the titles Protestant and Catholic. Does not truth of all kinds continually advance through the one to the other? Galileo's astronomy has now to be taught in Jesuit colleges; the rotation of the earth round the sun

from a Protestant has become a Catholic truth. Athanasius, the most absolute of Protestants—Athanasius *contra mundum*—has become the great representative of the Catholic dogma of the Trinity.

For God to dwell in us as His Temple is indeed unutterably much. But for us to dwell in His Presence as the Universal Temple is even more.

Our religion must not consist, as it were, in possessing ourselves of bits of His Presence to enshrine apart for our own separate delight, as a secret joy to indulge in, rather than a Divine common Life to inspire us. In this way the Tabernacle of Life itself might soon become a reliquary of dead delights.

Let us not so much take even His love as a secret joy to delight in, as give ourselves up to His love and dwell in it, as in healthy open air, in the vivifying common sunshine, underneath the all-embracing ætherial sky, which touches and unites us all.

Wherever caste, in any form, creeps in, exclusive claims to peculiar privilege, then, I think, Christianity, in its glorious loveliness and uniting life, dies out.

People trouble themselves a great deal about "partial truth," and "germs of error."

But that truth should be "partial" in its reception into our limited being seems to me as inevitable as that we are finite, or that we are sinful.

None is good but God, and we only in measure as we dwell in Him. Christ only is "the Truth," the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth. His full-orbed holiness and truth can only be absorbed and reflected in the full orb of the whole Catholic Church; in her individual members, even the most saintly, only as through a prism.

And as to "germs of error," I think they are mixed up with every handful of good

am sure they are inevitably concealed in every clod even of good ground in which we sow it.

If once the spirit of judging, instead of the spirit of learning, possesses us, I believe there is not an Epistle of St. Paul's in which (if we dared say so) we could not detect "extreme statements," or a sermon of St. Peter's, in which **we** might not moan over "defective doctrine."

It is a tremendous claim for any mortal, sinful creature to make, to be "*sound*;" sound, I suppose, as a bell of perfectly-combined metals, and without flaw, is sound! Does any earthly bell ring thus sound and true to angelic listeners?

All our hope of perfect truth, it seems to me, lies in living as members of the one Catholic Church, seen and unseen, of all ages, in which all the truth is orb'd; and in keeping close to the heart of Him from Whom all the truth she reflects shines.

And our chief security from "germs of error," it seems to me, consists in getting fresh air and sunshine for the good grain, that it may grow and bring forth fruit, and choke the tares.

Sowing and growing are our part, not pulling up evil germs or tares.

Or, perhaps, to pursue the image further, even sowing and growing, in the deepest sense, are not our part, but God's.

In the fullest sense the sower is the Son of Man; and we have but to take His yoke upon us, as the oxen, and tread out His furrows.

In the fullest sense it is God Who giveth the increase, and causes the growing; and we have only, as Goethe says, "to do willingly what the flower does unconsciously," spread ourselves to the light and drink it in.

The thing I dreaded with unutterable dread has come on me at last.

The timid tender heart that loved me so tremblingly, but so dearly, has ceased to beat. The long struggle is over. The last link with my earliest childhood is broken; the last who knew me from the beginning is gone.

Aunt O'Brien passed away from us a month since. And the great beautiful house seems empty. And I am left alone in what used to seem to me this dreary Paradise, which I dreaded more than any purgatory with which I could be threatened.

She came at last to trust and obey so simply; and, in consequence, her unfettered heart flowed out in such a childlike gush of love and joy, that it is easy to think of her in the Paradise to which we believe she has been taken.

Yet, strange to say, sadly as I miss the dear feeble voice, my lonely Paradise has ceased to be a terror and a dreariness to me.

It is walled around by no impassable barriers, and separated by no gulf from the wilderness. Its rivers are ponded back into no dreary marsh, but may go forth whither they will, that is, whither God wills, to water the whole land.

Endless possibilities of blessing and help, of the joy which "makes all other joys go less," "the joy of doing kindnesses," open before me, in the life my God will make for me. For, most surely, my life is not now to begin to be a Palace of Art which I am labouring "to build unto myself" for "a lordly pleasure-house."

Naturally, not in confusion, one on the other as I should manage it, but "*à pleines mains l'un après l'autre,*" He will fill my life, day by day, with such services as He permits and commands. If I trust Him, He will make my life, my single I row and
blossom as sweetly with His trace by
with her children and 21

daughters who arise and call her blessed, with her blessed wedded home-life in the past, her rich motherly family life in the present, her imperishable hopes of fulfilment and meeting in the future.

* * * * *

It is over now. And thank God Harry Leigh did not lose his way in life ; neither he, I think, nor I. And surely he has not missed the way into the life of the spirits perfected.

A letter reached us speaking of health a little shattered, and with what seemed to us a forced cheerfulness, of evil to come out of good, inasmuch as the West Indian climate was pronounced unfavourable for him, and he had heard of a country practice which he thought would suit him.

And then just a little allusion, which perhaps no one but I understood, to a country practice once having been thought by his friends the best career for him.

And then he came home, and from Southampton came a telegram to Grace which perplexed her much, asking her to come and meet them.

I felt sure Harry must be very ill to have yielded to this, seeking, as it were, his widowed sister's protection. And I went with her.

There, we found them, in one of the smaller inns, in a little dingy back room. They could not afford anything more spacious ; he and the bright little Canadian wife, and the four children (two had died), she full of tenderness, but evidently little aware of what we saw in a moment but too plainly, and unable to give up the long habit of depending on his wisdom and ability, seeking his will and direction in every trifle.

Oh, how changed he was, and the unmistakable cough, and the unmistakable terrible hopefulness about himself.

We took them all at once to our rooms in the large

hotel, and, in the airy spacious rooms, he seemed to breathe again, in every sense to breathe again.

To me he said—

“ You see, I am coming to my true destiny, after all, —to the country practice, to healthy open-air life, the service of the poor, the rides over the moors.”

How it smote my heart ; all so evidently for ever past for him !

He suffered us to bring him to us, to Aunt O'Brien's house, for a time, “ while arrangements were being made for his new country home.”

It touched me to see his anxiety that the children should find a place in our hearts, to excuse anything that might be unconventional in their ways. For his Thérèse he was too loyal to think any excuses needed. And indeed they were not. She found her way at once to our hearts, by her childlike vivacity, her dependence, her trust in him, above all by her devoted love to him.

“ I think she has made me a little wiser and better,” he said one day playfully, “ just by believing me altogether wise and good.” Whilst she, on her part, resented the possibility that he could ever have needed any improvement.

But indeed he had grown wiser, better, nobler. Thank God, he had not missed his way.

He felt quite sure I had not missed mine. I believe not. I would indeed have given up all, for the old life we had once hoped for. And yet I believe we have neither of us missed our way.

Now and then some little casual word could not but open the existence of that world which had once existed for us two alone, whose keys were in no other hands.

But he has gone to a world where we shall understand each other perfectly, where *all* the past will
where all the way through this great wild
looked back over together, and

suffered to hunger, as well as those when He fed us with manna, shall be seen to have been all, all, His good way by which He led us home.

And his Thérèse and her children remain with us committed to Grace and to me as to two grandmothers to love and cherish, oh how dearly ! for his sake.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE MOTHER'S NOTE-BOOK.

I WONDER if any one loves "In Memoriam" as I do,—a "Vita Nuova" of our age, it seems to me,—inspired to divine vision, as Dante was, by a pure human affection.

The years have opened and open it slowly to me, in some measure as they open the Book of Books, THE human and Divine Book.

Tossed back again and again to the abysses of doubt, and darkness, and death; again and again it presses upward to the light and the life, and each time into fuller light, and higher life, until it rises to the great Christian hymn with which it begins.

The subtle seeming repetitions which are not repetitions, but the subject advancing through ever deeper harmonies to its full power; the delicate interweaving of exquisite pictures with the anguish, because through all the tears the true poet's eye cannot help seeing, and seeing truly; the mirroring of the tumultuous thought of the times, or rather the tossing of the heart itself on the tumultuous waves of the times; and yet the gathering of all the storm and tumult into music—"beating the music out;" and then, the music to beat as to the heart!

Great poem on immortality
by love; faith, again e

Divine Incarnate Love which reconciles all things to and in Itself. Thank God it was written, and for him who in the Sanctuary of Sorrow learned to sing it.

We are settled at last, my sister Winifred and I, in what is, I suppose, to be the last sojourning place of our Pilgrim's Progress, waiting beside the "ancient river" for the messengers to summon us across it home.

And I must say it does very often seem like Bunyan's "Land of Beulah" to me.

Heaven seems so close, and all who are there; and at the same time earth, and all who are there, seem nearer and dearer than ever; its sorrows more touching and more teaching, its joys sweeter and deeper, and more worthy of being the foretastes and antetypes they are.

I think people need to understand more of all human hearts, and of our Lord's, who deem it strange that He should have wept with the sisters of Bethany over the sorrow He was so soon to heal.

All sorrow surges up to the heart which knows sorrow, in the touch of *any* sorrow; as the possibilities of the ocean are in the rock-pool it fills from tide to tide. And just because in the measures of eternity, all affliction is but light, and but for a moment, one moment of sorrow may be deep and weighty with links and lessons for eternity.

We are living in a kind of natural free community in Winifred's home, the paradise she so dreaded, in which she now so delights.

It has all come about naturally; growth, not construction.

Shall I call it an English country house, with its central hearth of a cultivated home: and its wide

hospitality to all nations and classes? or shall I call it a Christian Fraternity, "Little Sisters of the Poor," "Brotherhood of the Free Spirit?" It is something of both.

Years ago I remember our being struck with these words of Renan's in "Les Apôtres":—

"C'est en songeant au monde romain qu'on est frappé des miracles de charité et d'association libre opérés par l'Eglise. Jamais société profane, ne reconnaissant pour base que la raison, n'a produit de si admirables effets.

"La loi de toute société profane, philosophique, si j'ose le dire, est la liberté, parfois l'égalité, jamais la fraternité. La charité, au point de vue du droit, n'a rien d'obligatoire; elle ne regarde que les individus; on lui trouve même certains inconvénients, et on s'en défie. Toute tentative pour appliquer les deniers publics au bien-être des prolétaires semble du communisme.

"Quand un homme meurt de faim, quand des classes entières languissent dans la misère, la politique se borne à trouver que cela est fâcheux. Elle montre fort bien qu'il n'y a d'ordre civil et politique qu'avec la liberté; or, la conséquence de la liberté c'est que celui qui n'a rien et qui ne peut gagner rien meure de faim. Cela est, logique; mais rien ne tient contre l'abus de la logique. Les besoins de la classe la plus nombreuse finissent par l'emporter. Des institutions purement politiques et civiles ne suffisent pas; les aspirations sociales et religieuses ont droit aussi à une légitime satisfaction.

"Le Christianisme primitif peut se définir comme une grande association de p... effort héroïque contre l'égoïsme, fondé sur ce... le droit qu'à son nécessaire... ceux qui n'ont pas.

"La vie

du

moyen âge, ayant servi aux abus d'une église intolérante le monastère étant devenu trop souvent un fief féodal ou la caserne d'une milice dangereuse et fanatique, l'esprit moderne s'est montré fort sévère à l'égard du cénobitisme. Nous avons oublié que c'est dans la vie commune que l'âme de l'homme a goûté le plus de joie. Le cantique, 'Oh, qu'il est bon, qu'il est charmant à des frères d'habiter ensemble,' a cessé d'être le nôtre. Mais quand l'individualisme moderne aura porté ses derniers fruits; quand l'humanité, rapetissée, attristée, devenue impuissante, reviendra aux grandes institutions et aux fortes disciplines; quand notre mesquine société bourgeoise, je dis mal, notre monde de pygmées, aura été chassé à coups de fouet par les parties héroïques et idéalistes de l'humanité, alors la vie commune reprendra tout son prix. On retrouvera du sens aux paroles de Jésus et du moyen âge sur la pauvreté."

With us there was no design of founding any institution. But Winifred went quietly on from step to step; there was life in the work, and it has grown.

First, the orphanage for girls, and a second for their little brothers; then the convalescent home, in one and another of the fields belonging to her; then, the need of more help in the work, and workers joining us from various families around; then the work growing with the workers; and a home for those who could devote themselves more directly, which has become a training home; again, other families gathering round to help; always the work attracting workers, and always again the hearts of those at work expanding the work.

So the cluster of good fruits has grown year by year, until we are able to render help to other parishes, in the city, or in the country, through nurses, teachers, deaconesses, trained here.

And, through it all, the centre remains an English

home, with May in it, and her dogs, and her mission for the animal world ; this home, which Winifred thinks I have much to do with creating, though to me it all seems hers.

Yes all hers, our own Winifred's, because she is so entirely not her own, but Christ's and ours.

Our own Winifred ; yes, she is the centre of all, though, if she ever admits it, she says it is just because " she has no peculiar gifts ; her gift is absence of gift, so that she can be just an open hand to gather and distribute other people's gifts."

But the faculty of gathering and distributing, of uniting and discriminating, is just hand and heart, the administrative faculty, the *charisma*, the Divine gift of governing, so often, in little spheres or in large, among the Divine natural gifts of womanhood.

For, through her sympathy and care we are not only a community of servants of the poor ; all kinds of gifts are recognised.

There is leisure and room for all.

Music and painting, history and poetry, all sacred Muses, have their high place among us. And many a bright career of healthy artistic work has begun from its loving recognition here.

We are delivered from the burden of making either work or play for ourselves. Both, as in all true natural lives, come naturally. We never have to look around for methods either of employing or of amusing ourselves.

Love, as is the wont with love, necessarily and insensibly leads to self-renunciation ; and from self-renunciation comes the only true possession, that of the children and servants of the Father of heaven and earth. All things become what they should be our own.

Natural families are formed with families
around the Father of hearts en-

kindled to Christian service from far and wide throughout the world.

For, thank God, ours is but one little light-point among the thousand in our Christendom.

Our children come and go, bringing their children. Austin and Antonia have taken possession of our little home near the Abbey, working in the poor districts there, supplying us with interest and employment in abundance, and with a city centre.

Margaret and Victor in their seaboard parish make the seaside home for our sick and convalescent.

Bertrand and Monica constitute an emigration home for us in the busy manufacturing north.

Dorothy and Karl send us fresh air of thought and work from Germany.

Now and then Dora's friend Madame des Ormes stays a little while with us, and gives us glimpses into the Christian work of another Communion. And often we are joined by friends and fellow workers of other Protestant Communions. For it is our deep conviction that whilst the Anglican Church, unburdened with claims to infallibility or supremacy, and heir of all the Christian ages, may be the widest, freest, and most fruitful Communion in Christendom, she may, if by our narrow-heartedness we degrade her gifts for all men into exclusive privileges apart from all, become to us a mere insulated prison.

For, thank God, we are His freemen, free of all good and beautiful things in Christendom, in the world, by virtue of the freedom of the City of God, by virtue of belonging to Him who, being the Light of the world, is, we believe, the source of all light in the world.

Not, indeed, that our path is all smooth or level. It is often rough, and always uphill; often through storms, and always through the dry and thirsty land where no water is.

But the Pillar of Fire and Cloud goes before us, and the Rock with the living waters follows us all the way.

Not that His Presence hides us from ourselves in a dazzling haze. It reveals us to ourselves, depth after depth of emptiness and unworthiness. But it pierces the sin only to heal; it reveals the void only to fill it.

Not that we are floated through the world in a mystic trance; but as we strenuously press on, step by step, uphill, one step after another, the Divine paradoxes are fulfilled to us. "To those who have no might He increaseth strength. They run, and are not weary; they walk, and are not faint."

His Presence does go with us, and through the pain, and through the toil, and through the manifold changes of this transitory life, does "give us Rest."

Thank God, we are afraid of nothing; afraid of no temporal loss, because the great joy of possessing is the power of giving, and no loss can divest us of the power of giving our best gift—ourselves; afraid of nothing evil, because it is conquered, and being conquered, and to be conquered wholly; certainly of nothing good, on account of its happening to be entangled with evil; afraid of no light on account of its happening to be dimmed by darkness, or coloured by imperfect human media; because the good is sure, sooner or later, to be disentangled from the evil; because the light, the day, the Sun of Righteousness, the Eternal Light of the World must overcome.

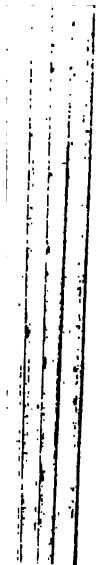
So we serve in the old service and sing the while the old immortal apostolic hymn—"All things are yours, whether the world," for He loved it, and overcometh its evil by His overmaster cometh its imperfect truth and be
"or life," it expands into His
it is, stage after stage, but th

"or things present," He is King of Kings now ; *"or things to come,"* He is Lord of Lords for ever,—*"All things are yours,"* because He has redeemed you, and ye are not your own because you have surrendered yourselves to Him and are His own. *"All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."*

THE END.











This book should be returned to
the Library on or before the last date
stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred
by retaining it beyond the specified
time.

Please return promptly.

OCT 4 '75 H

3627520

5627384
JAN 28 '76 H
JAN 1 1976

21428.22.15
The Bertram family.
Widener Library

003004899



3 2044 086 817 038

Widener Books



NAMPOTHEAD
EDITION.